BYZANTIUM IN THE SEVENTH CENTURY

ANDREAS N. STRATOS

II

634-641

Translated by
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS AND SOURCES*

At the end of the first volume of "Byzantium in the Seventh Century", I wrote that I was forced to stop at a point before the emergence of the Islamic threat. And I justified this by maintaining that to describe further the momentous chain of events in the Seventh Century a special study would be called for. I was criticized on this point, and it was brought to my attention that I should have brought the history to a close with the death of Heraclius. Byzantium had lost all its Eastern provinces, areas which it had never succeeded in absorbing. Nor had it succeeded ever in obtaining some understanding of their inhabitants and their special problems. Byzantium was thereafter confined to its more natural frontiers and possessed a population that spoke pretty much the same language, thus becoming something of a homogeneous nation. I could present many arguments against this theory, but I shall limit myself to justifying my attitude. The sudden appearance of the Arabs on the stage of history and their remarkable accomplishments undoubtedly constituted an historical phenomenon. The loss of the Eastern provinces and the confinement of the Empire to its more natural boundaries (though on this last point I have many reservations),[1] is the result of the emergence of this phenomenon. And it

* For detailed sources and works which are mentioned in the footnotes, the reader should refer to the Bibliography.

[1] With the death of Heraclius, all the Eastern provinces had not in fact been overrun. Egypt was lost to the Empire after the mission of the Patriarch Cyrus that had been sent by the second son and successor of Heraclius, in September 642. Africa, which cannot be treated as an Eastern province, and which in any case did not possess a population akin to that of the Empire, remained a Byzantine province despite repeated invasions and marauding incursions that occurred throughout the reign of Constantine III, was finally lost towards the close of the Seventh Century. Hence it is erroneous to maintain that with the death of Heraclius Byzantium was confined to its natural frontiers.

follows, therefore, that it would be sensible to record the events up to the phenomenon, then to examine this in particular before moving on to its repercussions.

I.

The sudden emergence of the Arabs and their truly remarkable successes caused great upheavals in the regions situated at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. The West was not to feel the threat confronting it until many decades later. But what were the conditions like in the West in any event? A large part of the Italian peninsula had been occupied by the Lombards who were in complete control of the indigenous population. Another portion belonged to the Byzantine Empire. But the cleavage between the Italian inhabitants and their Byzantine overlords continued to grow ever wider, and this was encouraged by the Popes themselves who struggled for greater independence from Constantinople. Spain had been occupied by the Visigoths and the country found itself well on the path to the Dark Ages of feudalism. France was fragmented by its various kings and petty rulers, in perpetual turmoil, unable to confront any problems that existed far from their frontiers. Feudalism reigned throughout the country. Central Europe, too, was fragmented and the feudal system of government firmly established. It had to face the ever constant Avar threat and the increasingly menacing Slavic danger.

Under such conditions it is understandable that the West could not foresee the menace of Islam which in any case was too far removed to be of immediate concern. Moreover, those in the West who looked upon Byzantium as an enemy could rejoice at its defeats at the hands of the Muslim. It was not until some time later, when the danger approached the West, when it faced economic ruination and actual enslavement, that it awoke to the danger.

For interminable years, indeed for centuries, the dangers that threatened Europe, long after the Arab threat had subsided, from the combined forces of Asia, were met head-on only by Byzantium. And many were the moments of near-collapse of the Empire, but it managed brilliantly to push back the menacing Asiatics up until the very moment that it was destroyed by the West itself.

But to return to the Seventh Century, or more precisely, from

634 until the close of the century, Byzantium was to struggle desperately against the threat that had arisen in the shape of the Arabs and their allies in the nearer East. In order the better to obtain a clearer picture of the events that unfolded so dramatically, it would be wise perhaps to devote some space to the conditions existing in the Arabian peninsula at the time and the reasons for the remarkably rapid expansion of the Arabs to the North, the West and the East.

I shall attempt, therefore, to examine these matters, but will confine myself to the events of only seven years, precisely those years which were most significant for the history of the Byzantine Empire. I will end the narrative with the loss of power by the sons of Heraclius. The economic, the administrative and the social facets will not be touched upon because for such a short period it is not conceivably possible to deal with these conditions separately and at any length. Moreover, there was nothing of basic significance occurring in these areas that could affect the history of Byzantium in the brief interval of seven years.

2.

A major problem confronting the scholar concerns the sources upon which to base the study of conditions existing at that time. Most of those critics who received my work favorably emphasized the wealth of the source material and my efforts to place before the reader the various contradictory or conflicting views that appear in this material. But one of the critics,[1] who otherwise gave an excellent review of my history, chastised me concerning the sources because I presented them without examining in detail the interrelationship of the one source with the next and which of these had any real value for the historian.

I could answer this criticism at length and assert that many times I had dealt with the reliability of the sources, but my main argument is that my book is a history and not a literary production. The examination of the various chroniclers and historians belongs to another branch of history. Krumbacher especially has dealt

[1] Robert Browning, English Historical Review, October, 1967.

with Byzantine literature. His work still retains its great value. In Greece of late, Professor Tomadakis has been dealing with the subject. Hence I shall not preoccupy myself with an exhaustively detailed analysis of the significance of each of the sources.

In the previous volume the sources were examined for each particular subject. But for the period under review in the present volume a more general yet concise scrutiny of the authors which would be useful for subsequent volumes of the history is perhaps called for, provided that these sources are identical.

For the entire period from A.D. 640 to the end of the Seventh Century, what is striking indeed is the complete lack of a single contemporary Byzantine chronicler. And it is curious that for this entire period covering the attacks of the Arabs and their conquests, in which no absolutely contemporary source exists,[3] there is an abundance of Muslim and non-Muslim sources which again are not contemporary with the events and tend to complicate the study of these events even further.

I. *Byzantine Sources*

The Chronicon Paschale, the only contemporary work, or at least, the portion that has survived, ends with the year 628. Another contemporary is George Pisides who has provided such a wealth of information on the campaigns of Heraclius against the Persians. Unfortunately, he too ceases to praise the accomplishments of his hero Heraclius. And so the two sources which are contemporary with the events cease to be of value for any occurrences after 630. Those Byzantine authors nearest to these dates are the Patriarch Nicephorus and the monk Theophanes. But both write in the Ninth Century, some 160 to 190 years after the events.

Nicephorus, Patriarch of Constantinople (806-815), wrote his history covering the years A.D. 620 to 769 in the first quarter of the Ninth Century. The sources upon which he based his narrative are unknown. He is simple and direct in style and writes with clarity, but for events of the Seventh Century his chronology at

[3] Except the Chronicle of John of Nikiu, about which more later.

times is not absolutely reliable. And unfortunately, in that portion of his history which has survived there is a considerable gap from the date of the coronation of Constantine III as co-Emperor and his murder in Sicily, that is, from October 641 to 668.

The monk Theophanes who died in 817 wrote between 810 and 815. He also used sources which have not come down, but which were pretty much the same as those of Nicephorus. The text that has survived is, at least for the period that concerns us, full of chronological errors. Often it is inconsistent and leads to erroneous conclusions.

George the Monk who wrote in the middle of the Ninth Century relies for his main sources on Nicephorus and Theophanes. His chronicle is purely a monastic production, and it is for this reason that he deals mainly with religious events, miracles and the like. Rarely does he provide information useful to the historian.

There is yet another chronicle attributed to Symeon the Logothete[4] which was compiled in the Tenth Century. This history has not survived intact. Some scholars maintain that the Chronicle of Leo the Grammarian which dates in the beginning of the Eleventh Century is but an elaboration of the Chronicle of Symeon. The Chronicle of Theodosius of Melitene is pretty much a faithful copy of Leo the Grammarian's history.

George Cedrenus lived towards the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth Century. John Zonaras, who was the Great Drungarius of the "Vigla" (Watch) and Protoasecretis (head of the imperial chancery), also wrote a history in the second half of the Twelfth Century. And both these historians rely closely on the chronicles of Theophanes, the Patriarch Nicephorus and George the Monk.

Other Byzantine chroniclers who rely upon the above works include Constantine Manasses who composed his work in verse in the first half of the 12th Century, Michael Glycas who was his contemporary, Joel in the 13th Century and the Synopsis Sathas which dates towards the end of the 13th Century.

An important source is also the work of Constantine Porphyro-

[4] The rank of Logothete was carried by senior officials of Byzantium, those in particular who handled affairs of the State, corresponding somewhat to present day Ministers. During the 10th Century there were several Logothetes.

genitus, Emperor of Byzantium (912-959). Thanks to his exalted status he was in a position to relate at length the what and the why of historical events.

Yet another source is provided by the various patridographoi (those who describe their own countries) in their descriptions of the monuments of Constantinople[5] in whose works much historical data is preserved. Also the Lexicon of Suidas which sometimes gives helpful information.

The papyri uncovered in Egypt supply some information on the conditions existing in that country for the period which concerns us.

In addition to these texts we have ecclesiastical documents and histories such as the Acta of the Patriarchate[6] and the Ecclesiastical History of Nicephorus Callistus Xanthopoulos of which however the last chapters have survived only in the form of a summary of the contents. The complete works of Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, and of Maximus the Confessor also supply valuable information on matters concerning Monothelitism, the dogma involving the '*Single-Will*', and the crisis caused by this new dogma.

Over and beyond the above ecclesiastical sources there are available the Lives of the Saints, the Miracula, and so on. One of the most important collections concerns the Miracles of Saint Demetrius on which many historians base their interpretations for conditions existing in the Balkans at the time. All of these lives of saints or books of miracles or church chronicles or monastic histories should be used with extreme caution. For all these sources have but one purpose, to show that events occurred thanks only to the intervention of the saints whose lives they depict. All information that derives from these sources is shrouded with such religious piety and fervour that often-times it is impossible to distinguish fact from fiction, reality from imagination, and has a tendency to make allusions not based on facts.

Such then are the Byzantine sources to which the scholar must turn for events of the 7th Century. As I have pointed out, the basic works are those of Nicephorus and the Chronicle of Theophanes. All other chroniclers for the most part base their sources almost ex-

[5] S.O.C., ed. Preger.

[6] Grummel, Les Regestes des Actes des Patriarches.

clusively on these two. In the event they supply information which is not available in Nicephorus or Theophanes, this would indicate that these texts have not survived intact or that they made use of some other authors whose work they did not bother to cite.

Very selective use of most of these sources therefore should be made. And it is important to bear in mind that all of these, excepting some religious or ecclesiastical works, were not contemporary with the events. Moreover, the Byzantines who recorded their histories were Orthodox and what in their belief constituted Orthodoxy. Hence they looked upon the Monophysites, or more important still, the Monothelite emperors with gravest suspicion. They did not hesitate to ascribe all the ills of the Empire to the non-Orthodox emperors who suffered the divine retribution as a consequence. It is significant that not a single Monothelite text has come down to us since all such works were destroyed after the Sixth Ecumenical Council that was convened in Constantinople in 680.

II. *Eastern Chroniclers*

These should be separated into Armenian and Syrian chroniclers who wrote in their native tongue, or in Arabic. In addition there are the Copts and lastly the Arabic historians.

1. *Copts*

The outstanding Copt chronicler (an Egyptian Monophysite) is John, Bishop of Nikiu. He is the only contemporary writer whose history would have been far more valuable had it survived intact. Unfortunately, only a single copy was found and this was in a fragmentary state. It is an Ethiopic translation not made from the original but from an Arabic translation of the original. John of Nikiu can be much relied upon, at least for the events that took place in Egypt. For events in Constantinople and other areas of the Empire, however, one should bear in mind that after the Arab conquest of Egypt all communications were practically broken with the Byzantine capital. Consequently, the events occurring in those areas which John records are at best second-hand. He lacked the

means and the possibility of ascertaining the veracity of any rumours or reports he received from those regions outside Egypt.

Some papyri together with various lives of saints which were published by Amélineau are the only other Coptic sources that have survived and these in the Coptic tongue.

2. *Armenians*

By far the outstanding Armenian chronicler is Bishop Sébéos. He records in the latter half of the 7th Century the history of Heraclius. Until recently a chronicle discovered in a monastery of Armenia was believed to be the history of Sébéos. But Abgarian[7] maintained that the actual chronicle of Sébéos has not yet been found and that the discovered chronicle was written at a later date by a certain Xosrov or Xosrovik who used as one of his sources the original Chronicle of Sébéos. Until the problem is resolved, however, I shall continue to refer to this work as Sébéos. This source is in any case well informed on the events that occurred in Armenia. It tends, however, to use fanciful interpretations of the events and its chronology is inconsistent. But I feel that one can rely upon the accuracy of the events recorded therein provided the fanciful or mythical element is carefully sifted from the text. As for the dating of events, special care must be taken to decipher the correct chronology.

Yet another contemporary source is the so-called "Narratio de rebus Armeniae" which was composed at the time the events took place but is of very little use for our study.

The historians Ghevond (Leonce), Thomas Ardzrouni and John the Catholicos (Patriarch of the Armenians) depend exclusively on the work of Sébéos, as also Acoghig of Taron, Vardan, and others who wrote general histories and were in effect compilers.[8]

Other Armenian historians and chroniclers included Moyses Dasxurançi or Kalankatuazi, specially for events occurring in Albania (the Caucasus), Kiracos de Gantzac and Orbelian. But as has been pointed out, the scholar should always regard the tendency towards myth and fancy of the Armenian chroniclers with reservation.

[7] Abgarian, Remarques sur l'histoire de Sébéos.

[8] See Peeters, "Byzantion", VIII (1933), p. 308.

III. *Syrians*

1. Those who wrote in their native tongue.

The most outstanding of these is Michael, the Jacobite,[9] Patriarch of Antioch (1166–1199). His history is a valuable aid especially for the events of which he was a contemporary. He, too, has a tendency to exaggeration and myth, as do other eastern chroniclers generally, but to a lesser degree.

Gregory Abu'l Faradj, otherwise known as Bar Hebraeus (i.e. son of the Jew), a Jacobite bishop, relies upon Michael's work. He wrote towards the close of the 13th century.

Other Syrian historians include Elie, Nestorian Metropolitan of Nisibis (Élie Bar Sinaya) who wrote in the 11th Century and Denys de Tell Mahre, whose authorship of a chronicle is debated. It is now known as the Chronicle of Pseudo-Denys.

There exist also many chronicles, mainly monastic productions, which generally depend one upon the other for sources. They are reliable to a certain extent on the accuracy of the events they record. These include the Chronicles of the years 724, 846, 819, 1234, the Chronicle of the Maronites, the Chronicle of Edessa, of John of Maron, and so on. And lastly, there is also the Chronicle of Thomas the Presbyter which is fairly reliable.

Such in brief are the Syriac sources which are written in the Syrian tongue.[10]

2. Those who wrote in Arabic.

The best of these is Agapius, a Greek by descent, Bishop of Hierapolis (Menbidj). He composed a general chronicle in the 10th Century.

Another Christian Arab historian is Yahya ibn-Sayd of Antioch

[9] We shall many times encounter such names as Jacobite, Copt, Melkite. The Jacobites were Monophysites of Syria and Mesopotamia, belonging to the Patriarchate of Antioch. Copts are the Monophysites of Egypt, Libya, and so on, owing allegience to the Patriarchate of Alexandria. The Melkites is another name for the Patriarchs of the official church. The latter is a Semitic word which crept into all the dialects that have the Semitic root and means royal. After the Synod of Chalcedon there existed at Alexandria and Antioch two patriarchates, the official and the Monophysitic.

[10] Baumstark, Geschichte der Syrischen Litteratur.

who continued where the Chronicle of Eutychius left off. He flourished in the 11th Century.

There are in addition other non-Syrian historians or chroniclers who also wrote in Arabic or whose works survive in Arabic translations. The best known of these is Eutychius, Melkite Patriarch of Alexandria (Sayd ibn-Bitrik or Batrik) who died in 940. He had written a chronicle beginning with the Creation and ending with the Caliph Al-Radi (322/934).

Also Egyptian was the Copt Severus, Bishop of El-Eschmounein in Upper Egypt. Severus recorded in Arabic a history of the Coptic Patriarchs of Alexandria based on Greek and Copt documents which he had found in monasteries of his see. His work is deemed a sort of Liber Pontificalis of the Coptic Church.[11]

In the beginning of the 13th Century there was Abu Salih, an Armenian living in Egypt who describes in his chronicle written in Arabic the churches and monasteries of Egypt.

Al-Makine was yet another Egyptian Copt, born in Cairo, who composed in the second half of the 13th Century a general history up to 1260. He relied mostly on the Chronicle of the Patriarch Eutychius and the Tabari Chronicle.

And lastly, there exists an Anonymous Chronicle which goes by the name of the Chronicle of Seert compiled probably by a Nestorian cleric or monk in the 13th Century. It contains valuable information on the Nestorian Church as well as on the Sassanid kings of Persia.

Such in brief are the Christian Eastern historians and chroniclers.[12] Irrespective of the interdependence of these sources, their tendency to exaggerate or to add much myth and fancy to the events is so great that they must be used with extreme caution. Moreover, in addition to this tendency one detects a certain hatred or prejudice for anything Greek and in particular for the official Byzantine church.

IV. *Arabs and Others*

No single contemporary Arab historian exists for the early years of Islam. Gradually over a period of time there was cultivated a

[11] B. Evetts, in the preface of the Severus edition.

[12] Graf, G., Geschichte der Christlichen Arabischen Litteratur.

certain tradition followed by schools that strove to maintain this tradition and ... enhance it. Many books dealing with Arabic Muslim literature exist to which the reader can turn. Rather than describe the sources, I will confine myself to citation by title and author with very brief comments on these sources.

The earliest Muslim annalist-historian whose work has survived is Al-Wakidi (747–823) who, however, confined himself to the life of Mohammed. There is also a pseudo-Wakidi which work contains narrations of the conquests but, understandably enough, it is more mythical than factual. Unfortunately, some historians such as S. Ockley base their narrative on this edition to bring out a very imaginative history of the Saracens.

Another ancient work is by Muhammed ibn-Ishak (deceased 767–769). This work has not survived intact and comes to us through the compiler Ibn-Hisham who lived in the 9th Century. Also, Ibn-Sayd of the 9th Century who wrote a biography of all the Companions of Mohammed.

But the most complete chronicle is that of Al-Tabari, described by Goeje as "Chronicles" or a history of the world. Tabari flourished in the early part of the 10th Century and used as his sources the traditions, Wakidi and Ibn-Ishak among others. There exists another version of the Chronicles of Tabari written by the Persian-Arab Balami at the close of the 10th Century.

By far the best of the Arab historians is Al-Baladhuri who lived in the 10th Century from whose work all subsequent chroniclers or historians draw.

Also of considerable importance is the work of the 10th Century historian Masudi concerning the history of the various Caliphs.

There are other historians of general interest such as Ibn-Qutaiba in the 9th Century, Abu Hanifa al-Dinawari of the same century, Al-Yakubi and Hamza al-Isfahani at the close of the 10th Century, Ibn al-Athir, end of the 12th and beginning of the 13th Century, Ibn al-Tiqtaqa who in the 13th Century wrote a history of the Muslim dynasties, known as Al-Fakhri, Abu'l Fida or Abu'l Fedae who compiled a general history covering events to the end of the 14th Century and based primarily on the work of Ibn-al-Athir, and Mirkhond of the 15th Century. And lastly, a voluminous history of the Caliphs was written by Suyuti in the second half of the 15th Century usingAbu'l Fida as his prime source.

There are, moreover, histories concerning the conquest of Egypt, Africa or Sicily, such for example as that of El-Kindi who lived at the end of the 10th and the beginning of the 11th Century, Noweiri or Nuwayri who wrote in addition many other works, Ibn Abd al Hakam, Ibn Khaldoun in the 14th and Al-Makrizi in the 15th Century.

In addition to these there exist lexica or dictionaries which provide much useful information such as that of Yaqut of the 13th or of Ibn Khallikan also of the 13th Century.

And finally, we have many Arab travellers and geographers who provide valuable historical and geographical notes. Some of these include Ibn Khurdadbeh of the 9th, Yakubi also of the 9th, Ibn al Haukal and Al-Muquaddasi of the 10th, El-Bekri of the 11th, Yaqut of the 13th and Abu'l Fida of the 14th Century.

As has been pointed out, the reader who is interested in Arabic Muslim literature, should refer to the works dealing specially with the subject.[13] I have limited myself to citing only those historians and geographers who in my opinion are the most significant for our period.

And again it should be noted that the Arab, the Persian-Arab or Egyptian-Arab historians, compilers, chroniclers, geographers and so on, relied on the oral tradition for the early stages. And understandably, with the passage of time the oral tradition became more distorted. And if one bears in mind their natural tendency to imaginative play, to the wondrous and the fabulous, one can easily see how very selectively must their various records be treated.

V. *Western Sources*

The primary sources upon which one can more or less depend for this period are three in number. These are:

1. The Acta of the ecclesiastical synods, local or general. The Acta

[13] The most important of these special studies include C. Brockelmann, Geschichte der Arabischen Litteratur in 5 volumes; B. Spuler, Iran in früh-Islamischer Zeit; J. Sauvaget (new edition by Cahen), Introduction à l'histoire de l'Orient Musulman. Many relevant articles are found in the Encyclopédie de l'Islam and in the Shorter Encyclopedia of Islam by H. Gibb and J. Kramers.

are gathered in the Mansi collection and are extremely useful for the history of the church in the period under examination.

2. The Liber Pontificalis of the Western Church, although all the events of the 7th Century have not been completely recorded by contemporary chroniclers.
3. Correspondence of the various Popes of the time which is assembled in such collections as the Monumenta Germaniae Historica and Migne, P.L.

In addition to the above I have used for the present volume the following Western sources:

1. Paul Diaconus, Historia Gentis Langobardorum. Paul wrote in the 8th Century and described the Lombard conquest of Italy, the battles between the Byzantines and Lombards, and in general the history of the Lombards in Italy to his times. It was one of the primary sources for the subsequent Western chroniclers.
2. The English monk Bede who in 724/725 compiled a chronicle. This work is a primary source for later Western chroniclers.
3. The translation of the Chronicle of Theophanes made by Anastasius the Librarian in the 9th Century.

I shall make reference to other Western sources for the period 641–685 in later volumes irrespective of whether I have made use of several sources for specific topics examined in the present volume.

Such along general lines are the sources that I have consulted and their relationships one to the other, but for the complete list of references one should refer to the Bibliography.

CHAPTER II

ARABIA AND MOHAMMED

In the southern region of nearer Asia there exists a vast peninsula extending over an area of some 3,000,000 square kilometres. It resembles in a way a portion of land that has been wrenched from the body of Africa.[14] The peninsula is ringed by mountainous stretches isolating its interior from the sea. And in the interior there are extensive desert areas. The peninsula has a severe and arid climate with few sizeable towns and a few villages, several oases in which some small stretches of land are sparsely cultivated. These oases were covered for the most part with date and palm trees. Such is the peninsula of Arabia, a land so poor that its inhabitants had with greatest difficulty obtained their barest sustenance.

Extensive deserts and waterless areas stretching to the North and towards the East of the peninsula separated it from Syria and Mesopotamia. A progressive desiccation of the soil had aggravated even further the existing wretchedness and hunger of its dwellers, and forced many of the tribes of the peninsula to migrate to neighboring countries across the desert to settle in more fertile regions among the local inhabitants with whom they were soon to amalgamate.

Certain provinces of the Arabian peninsula were already clearly defined by the 7th Century.[15] Najd, in the central plateau, was inhabited for the most part by nomadic tribes. Hedjaz (Al-Hijaz), a narrow strip of land extended along the length of the Red Sea. Herein were situated the two most important cities of Arabia, Mecca (Al-Makkah) which had been anciently known as Macoraba, and Aethribus, the later Medina (Al-Madinah). Uman occupied the northeastern portion of the peninsula, whereas Hadramaut lay at its southeastern end. Yemen (derived from Yaman, meaning South)

[14] Blanchard, L'Arabie, p. 171

[15] Vassiliev, Histoire de l'Empire Byzantin, I. 264–5.

or as it was anciently known "Felix Arabia" or "Aromatic Arabia," lay to the south. The latter was the most developed region in the peninsula not only because of its location but because of its able leaders, the Saba, who administered the country.

The inhabitants were extremely individualistic, fiercely independent and resented any authority. They continued in the 7th Century, as of old, to supply the more civilized world with perfumes and spices, and the country was known as the "frankincense land" as Pliny once described it. Through the Yemen and Mecca, Arabia comprised then, as she does at present, a strategic link between East and West.

The Romans once only attempted to subdue the country. The effort was made in the reign of Augustus but met with no success. To protect their empire from the incursions of the Arabs, the Romans had in the 4th Century deployed two legions of troops in the regions bordering on Syria, Palestine and Arabia.[16] Later, the Byzantines employed the Arabs who dwelt in the frontier regions between Syria and Arabia to guard the frontiers and to repulse any invaders.[17]

The name "Arab" does not describe in the absolute sense the denizen of Arabia, but means a nomad who dwells in a tent in the desert. Even more confined in meaning is the word "Bedouin" which denotes the pastoral inhabitant who dwells in the desert in a tent.

In the early phase of the 7th Century there was no indication whatsoever that Arabia was destined to play a dynamic role in history. Because of its complete lack of any geographical or political unity, the country appeared relegated to a primitive and isolated life.

I.

Pre-Islamic Arabia possessed absolutely no national unity. With the exception of Yemen, which had been ruled by its kings for a long uninterrupted period, there dwelt numerous and various tribes owing allegiance only to their clan leaders or chieftains.

The inhabitants were Semitic, but the geographical unity of the

[16] Nau, Les Arabes Chrétiens etc., p. 32.

[17] See Volume I of the present work, pp. 17–19.

region did not signify any uniformity of habitation or establishment.[18] According to Nau, it is not absolutely sure whence the first inhabitants of the peninsula came.[19]

The Arabs were divided basically into two groups, the settled folk and the nomadic inhabitants. The permanent denizens lived in the cities, the villages and the oases. They were preoccupied mostly with commerce and the cultivation of the soil. Due to the configuration of the land, the non-nomadic part of the population lived principally in the coastal zones. Central and Northern Arabia including a large portion of the Hedjaz were inhabited almost exclusively by the nomadic peoples.

The tribe or clan was the fundamental unit of Arab society, especially of the Bedouins.[20] Each family had its tent and the encampment made up a clan[21] (alhayy),[22] whereas a collection of related clans composed the tribe, or banu. Members of the tribe believed that they were linked by blood ties.[23] At the head of both the clan or tribe was a leader or chieftain. the sheik, who was generally the elder. Life existed only within the limits of the tribe and each tribe was obligated by custom to provide assistance, protection, and to exact revenge for insult or injury suffered by any of its members. The smallest pretext would suffice to set off a chain reaction of vendettas and bloody warfare, and intertribal warfare was very common. Unusual rivalry existed between tribes and there existed, for example, an unprecedented hatred between the Kahtans and the Kaysites. Very often, however, the tribes united either to ward off a foreign invader or to make joint incursions or raids.[24] Thanks to such a communal organization the individual was treated solely as a member of the clan or at best, of the tribe, and every person had certain obligations as well as rights, not as individuals but as members of the clan or tribe. The person who for one reason or another was expelled from the tribe had to fend for himself since he no longer enjoyed communal protection. On the other hand, the

[18] Dussaud, La penetration des Arabes etc., p. 14.
[19] Nau, L'Arameen Chrétien.
[20] Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 26.
[21] Clan – all those who claimed descent from a common ancestor. A primitive form of social organization.
[22] Husaini, Arab Administration, p. 6.
[23] Huart, Histoires des Arabes p. 11.
[24] Zaydan, Umayyades, etc.

individual affiliated with the tribe was not isolated, for if he were to suffer an injury or insult, his blood kin, his tribe, was compelled to protect him, to come to his aid and, if necessity so deemed it, to provide the means whereby revenge would be exacted without asking whether he was in the right or wrong.[25]

The sources of water, scarce enough in the desert, the wells and springs, pasturage, the few cultivated areas all belonged communally to the tribe. In the event of a severe drought, the Bedouins would collect their families and belongings and move on to seek new pasture land. This movement of Bedouins was motivated by the need to find new grazing sites and sources of water.

The harsh and demanding environment of the arid country developed in the Bedouin an exceptionally strong physique inuring him to all the rigours of life in the desert.[26]

Poets describe with lyrical enthusiasm the supreme virtue of the Bedouin, his remarkable endurance and tenacity. Individualism is deeply ingrained in him and this because he lived alone with his family in the barren wastes. Every neighbour was to him a potential rival for the little water available or for the small pasturage that he needed for his own flock.[27] Life in the desert had often developed in him, among other traits, harsh and inhuman customs. If he acquired an infant daughter, his fetishism not permitting him to kill her, he would inter her alive, for to the needy Bedouin the girl was an unnecessary burden and he soon rid himself of this.

According to Ibn Khaldoun,[28] the Arabs are a fierce, rapacious and indomitable people. They were forever prepared to rob and plunder the property of others.

Because of the demanding conditions of life in the desert, the ingenuity and keenness of mind of the Bedouin as well as the ease with which he adapted himself to the environment became legendary. He possessed a remarkable endurance which enabled him to undertake lengthy expeditions as well as to undergo hunger and thirst to a great degree. The Bedouin possessed very special qualities. He was abstemious, self-centred, could endure much suffering, and was stubborn in battle even under the most adverse conditions. He had

[25] Brockelmann, Histoire des Peuples, etc., p. 17.
[26] Dussaud, La pénétration des Arabes en Syrie, p. 123
[27] Lammens, Le Berceau de l'Islam, p. 187
[28] Les Prolégoménes, I, 257.

an overbearing self-confidence in himself and an unbounded resoluteness. He enjoyed revenge. He would accept no insult to his dignity and would react immediately were his feelings offended. But this would inevitably lead to retaliation. Blood-feuds and vendettas were all too frequent between the tribes. The Bedouin is cunning, has a simple mentality, is temperate primarily because of the conditions under which he exists and in a state of constant alert and nervous tension. He is also predisposed to mysticism. With all these qualities the Bedouin could offer much were he to be inspired or led by able leaders.

Hunger was an ever present threat to the nomad. This threat combined with the intense egotism that marked him, inevitably led him to covet the possessions of his neighbour. Raiding for plunder, known as razzia, was looked upon by the Bedouin not only as a necessary means for survival but as a noble profession.

The poets who generally express the feelings of the people maintained that the purpose of the Arab was to be a ruler or a slave, a robber or the victim of thievery.

In the vast desert wastes, where the aggressive spirit existed and where necessity was the guiding force, expeditions for loot and pillage were among the most manly preoccupations of the Bedouin.[29] All tribes, even those that had been Christianized, devoted themselves to the razzia. The innate desire for robbery and loot was, after all, a part of his makeup. The poets always lauded this tendency and this pastime. The poet Al-Qutami sang that the preoccupation of the Bedouin was to raid all territories, even those of their brothers, in the event they could find no other victims to rob. Another poet records that glory was gained by the lance. The razzia, in short, was one of the principal means of survival among the Bedouins.[30]

The Arabs of the Hijaz never possessed an alphabet.[31] Most nomads were illiterate, hence their traditions were exclusively oral. Their language lacked homogeneity. In fact their language was but a Semitic dialect which was spoken with variations among the nomads and many of the permanent settlers of the peninsula. They were inordinately fond of poetry which helped them to maintain a

[29] Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 25.
[30] Gaudefroy-Demombynes, Le Monde musulman, etc., p. 138.
[31] Nau, Les Arabes Chrétiens de Mésopotamie, p. 3.

language of their own and to mould it. We thus discover in the poetry a literal description of the life of the Arab of the desert.

Polytheism and idolatry were the dominant religions in the peninsula. Each tribe had its gods, whether stones or springs, and its sacred idols. The most widespread form of idolatry was "stone worship."[32] Other tribes worshipped trees or springs. In yet other regions of Arabia, worship of the stars was the dominant religion. They believed in the existence of spirits or jinns. Because of the existing hostility between many tribes the spread of monotheism was extremely difficult. Gradually, however, the idea of one god began to spread, in the form of Judaism or Christianity, due to the frequent contacts with Syria and Palestine. The ruler of Yemen, for instance, embraced the Hebrew faith.

In the northwestern region of the Arabian peninsula there existed many Jewish communities. It is certain that most of these inhabitants were not of Jewish origin but were converts to Judaism.[33] These were divided into tribes that often warred one against the other. They possessed many towns and oases,[34] specially in the Hijaz where numerous oases were owned by them. The Jews understandably were the outstanding merchants, but there was hardly a profession which they did not control.[35] They were the goldsmiths and money-changers and occupied themselves with the making of weapons and farming implements. Excellent cultivators of the soil, they planted many date and palm trees. In Medina they possessed the best wells, the most beautiful springs and the most productive estates.

In the northeastern areas of Arabia, Zoroastrianism had obtained a foothold thanks to the proximity of Persia.[36]

But the northern Arabian peninsula was strongly influenced by the Christians. And since the Christians of Syria and Persia were Monophysites or Nestorians, it follows that the Arabs were converted to these sects of the Christian church. Arabia had undergone considerable influence from the Persians who had from time to time occupied the easternmost and northern parts of the peninsula.

[32] Amantos, History of the Byzantine State, I, p. 309.
[33] Baron, Histoire d'Israel, III, 78.
[34] Roth, Histoire du People Juif, p. 175.
[35] Lammens, Le Berceau de l'Islam, p. 155.
[36] Bevan, Mahomet and Islam etc., in C.M.H., II, p. 304.

Mecca, the foremost religious centre of Arabia, possessed its idols, especially the Black Stone. The tradition maintains that the Black Stone had fallen from the heavens, sent by God. It was sheltered in a cube-like edifice, the Kaaba or Kaasba, which today, after its repairs, rises to a height of about 50 feet, and it constituted the main object of worship. The structure was reputedly built by Abraham. According to Arabic legend, Ishmail, son of Abraham, who was begot by Agar, was believed to be the common ancestor of the Arabs, from which they became known as the Ishmaelites.

Every year thousands would make the pilgrimage to Mecca to pay their respects to the Black Stone and the deities of the Kaasba. But this pilgrimage could not have taken place because of the many dangers inherent on the route, and so at certain times of the year all hostile activity between tribes was forbidden. A kind of truce was proclaimed at which time people could move about freely and safely in the unruly peninsula. All tribes would then send representatives to Mecca. The truce occurred during the seventh month or the month of "Rajab" of the Arabs and for an additional longer period, that is, the 11th, 12th and first month of the year (dhu-al-Qudaa, dhu-al-Hijjah and Moharram).

The permanent or settled inhabitants of the villages and towns devoted much of their energies to commerce. If the towns were not near the sea, they were for the most part found along the routes taken by the caravans.

Mecca was by far the most prosperous city of Arabia. Thanks to its geographical location it early became a vital link in the lengthy commercial routes of southern Arabia and a meeting place for all elements of the diversified population of the peninsula. The annual fairs which functioned during the pilgrimages to the Black Stone not only gave added impetus to commerce and the exchange of goods but to the exchange of ideas.[37] To these fairs the Arabs owe much from the cultural point of view and the cultivation of the monotheistic idea.

From as early as the 5th Century the dominant tribe in Mecca was the Qurayshites whose leading clan were the Mahsum and the Umayyads. The Quraysh who wielded a considerable influence in the Hijaz ruled Mecca through a kind of syndicate of merchants

[37] Brockelmann, Histoire des Peuples etc., p. 18.

and bankers. It was in effect a form of oligarchical democracy.[38] Large caravans were sent yearly to Syria and Palestine, transporting the produce of Arabia or articles that had arrived from the distant East through the Indian Ocean, and to purchase from the Syrian markets goods that were essential for the livelihood of the residents of Arabia.[39] Every inhabitant of Mecca could participate in the huge undertaking of the caravans by investing even the smallest capital. The caravans normally were composed of 2500 camels accompanied by 300 men.[40]

The movements of these caravans across the Arabian peninsula usually took place in those months when a "truce of God" had been declared. But though the Arabs generally honoured the truce, the roads were not always secure and the organizers of caravans preferred to pay the local tribal chieftains along the trade routes for their safe passage. Normally the caravans adhered to the established road leading to Bosra, the first gateway to Syria, and Gaza. The caravans would make halts in the towns of Ailah,[41] Maan,[42] Adhruh[43] and Amman. The area round about Bosra[44] had been for long Christianized. The Arabs had infiltrated into this region centuries before and thus the majority of its inhabitants was Arabic.

Bosra was the terminal point for the caravans arriving from Mecca and a great wheat mart for the inhabitants of the Hijaz. The Romans had built a network of roads which made for the rapid transportation of goods.[45] The entire region round was inhabited for the most part by Arabs of the Ghassan tribe. The Quraysh had to reach an agreement with the Ghassan chieftains for permission to enter the

[38] Lammens, La Syrie, I, p. 39.
[39] Houdas, l'Islamisme, p. 22.
[40] Husaini, Arab Administration, pp. 10–11.
[41] Modern Aquaba.
[42] An oasis in the west of Arabia, city of Jordan. According to Arab geographers, Maan was a small city at the edge of the desert situated on the caravan route leading towards Mecca. It is built on an elevation rising to over 1000 metres, and is today a road junction east of and near Petra through which the pathways passed to Gaza, northern Egypt and Saoudi Arabia.
[43] Small town in the area of Balka on the old frontier of Arabia and Palestine. It was also known as Azrah.
[44] City of Syria in the land of the Druzes situated south of the mountain of the Druzes. It is the modern Bosra ech Cham on the border between Syria and Jordan.
[45] Nau, Les Arabes Chrétiens de Syrie, p. 92.

territory. Exchange of goods usually took place without the walls of the city.[46] At Gaza, another terminal station for caravans, many colonies of Arabs had settled from as early as the 4th Century. And many nomads of Semitic origin circulated in the area during the pasturage season.

Negotiations between the Byzantines and Arabs for the movement of goods in these districts were generally conducted by the governor of Bosra.

Such was the background of the Arabs and the Arab peninsula in the period when Mohammed made his appearance.

2.

Mohammed was born in the holy city of Mecca. Tradition has not preserved for us the precise date of his birth. The year A.D. 570 is pretty universally accepted by most scholars.[47] He was most probably born in the 11th or 12th of the month Rebi I in 570.[48] Some historians maintain, however, that he was born in the year 571.[49] According to Leo the Grammarian, Mohammed was a descendant of Ishmael the son of Abraham.[50] He was from a poor family, and the clan to which he belonged, the Banu Hashim (or Hakkim) was one of the poorer family groups within the powerful and extremely wealthy Quraysh tribe. His father, Abdullah, a small merchant who died two months before Mohammed's birth, left him a few camels, a small herd of goats and a woman slave who looked after him in his youth. His mother Aminah died when he was about six years of age. Then he was taken over by his grandfather Abd-al-Muttalib who was 76, and later by the brother of his father, Abu-Talib. He was most probably a keeper of the flock in his early years,

[46] Lammens, La Mecque à la veille de l'Hegire, p. 143.

[47] Amantos, History of the Byzantine State, I, 340; Bevan, Mahomet and Islam, C.M.H., II, 304; Lambros, History of Greece, V, 703; Vasiliev, Histoire de l'Empire Byzantin, I, 269; Brockelmann, Histoire des Peuples etc., p. 21; Huart, Histoire des Arabes, I, 89; Houdas, L'Islamisme, p. 20; Montgomery Watt, Mohammed at Mecca.

[48] Rebi I is the third month of the Muslem year. It is difficult to correlate this with the months of the Western calendar since the Muslem year is smaller by 11 days and normally numbers 354.

[49] Brockelmann, Histoire des Peuples, p. 21; Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 111; Wahl, Mohammed et l'Islamisme, I, 438.

[50] Leo the Grammarian, pp. 152–153.

but we know that at the age of 12 he accompanied his uncle on a caravan journey to Syria.[51]

His education was minimal and had been completely overlooked. In all likelihood he could not even write. It is certain that no one had ever seen him write.

Mohammed was soon forced to go to work, and his first task was that of the camel driver. At the age of 24 he entered into the employ of the wealthy widow Khadijah. Very soon, from a camel driver he became a caravan leader making frequent journeys to Syria and Palestine. Upon returning from one of these trips, he married the rich widow who was 15 years his senior. Although polygamy was the established practice in Arabia, Mohammed for 26 years refused to marry another woman as long as Khadijah lived. Marriage to the wealthy widow released him from mundane cares and he could thereafter devote himself to other interests.

Mohammed had no association whatsoever with religious studies. Nothing in his makeup indicated that he was so inclined. In the course of his various journeyings to Syria and Palestine, he had learned from a certain monk the rudiments of the Christian faith, and he did in fact learn many passages from the Old and the New Testaments. It appears, however, that his first knowledge of Christianity was acquired from a Monophysitic monk,[52] and from the Arab Jews he became acquainted with Judaism. Sébéos[53] records that he was well versed in the faith of Moses, but Samuel d'Ani, on the contrary, states that he was not all that well acquainted with the Hebrew dogma.[54]

Mohammed had been deeply disturbed by the chaotic conditions existing in the Arabian peninsula and by the widespread idolatry that was practiced in sharp contrast with what he had observed in Syria during his various trips to that country. Already before his time and in the course of his youthful years there existed a class of native ascetics that went by the name of Hanifs,[55] members of

[51] Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 111.

[52] Amantos, op. cit., I, 310; Bartholomew (Migne, P.G., CIV, pp. 1448–58) informs us that a "certain Jacobite by name Bahira, illiterate", attached himself to Mohammed.

[53] Sébéos, Histoire d'Heraclius, p. 95.

[54] Dulaurier, Recherches sur la chronologie Arménienne, p. 211, fn. 1.

[55] Dawson, Le Moyen-Age, p. 160.

which sect preached a kind of monotheism and practised a severe discipline of ethical truths.[56] One of the most famous was Zayd-ibn-Amr who resided in Mecca.[57]

After 30, or perhaps a slightly older age, Mohammed began to have religious crises at which time he sought privacy in caves and retreats wherein he could withdraw for contemplation and hear strange voices. Initially he did not preach, but conversed and argued and proclaimed his thoughts. After 610, he began to dictate the revelations that the archangel Gabriel had ostensibly communicated to him and which were incorporated in the Koran. All the early revelations made no reference to political matters but concerned only faith and morals.

The first converts of Mohammed were his wife, his cousin Ali, his emancipated slave Zayd and the aristocrat merchant Abu Bakr. His teachings were not well received by his compatriots in Mecca. Subsequently, Umar, Uthmann, Zubayr, Talhah and Sayd ibn-abi-Waqqac became adherents of the new teachings [57a].

Initially there was little reaction against the teachings and the homilies of the Prophet, but when he began to proclaim an absolute monotheism and to demand destruction of the idols, those who controlled Mecca became alarmed. If the teachings of Mohammed took hold their vested interests would be vitally threatened. Thanks only to the fact that he belonged to the powerful tribe of the Quraysh, he escaped unpleasant consequences. But reaction set in and grew ever greater with the increase in numbers of the believers of Mohammed. His followers began to be persecuted and many were forced to flee to Abyssinia. Faced with the rising danger, Mohammed himself sought refuge in another city. Al-Taif, southeast of Mecca, which was a thriving commercial center, was suggested. But Mohammed had met many pilgrims from another trading center, Yathrib, some 300 miles north of Mecca. It too was a busy and thriving community and an important station for caravans going to Syria. So he preferred this city, for because of the existence of a

[56] Cf. the contradictions of Montgomery Watt in the Encyclopédie de l'Islam (n.ed.) in the entry 'Hanif'.

[57] Zayd was a Quraysh who died when Mohammed was 35 years of age, and is considered in the Moslem tradition (Hadith) as one of the real faithful. It is said that he is one of those who prophesied the coming of a prophet.

[57a] Montgomery Watt, op. cit.

Jewish community there, monotheistic ideas were more widespread.

Having reached an agreement with the pilgrims from Yathrib he ordered his faithful to emigrate thither while he, having managed to escape in the night from Mecca, soon followed. He reached Yathrib in the summer or in September 622,[58] where he took up his new residence. The migration known as the Hijrah, (or Hegira), had taken place and this became the starting point of the Muslem era. Subsequently, it was ordained that the official Muslim year, irrespective of whether it was the actual day on which Mohammed arrived in Yathrib, should begin on Friday, the 16th day of the month of Moharrem, the first month of the Moslem year. This official date coincided then with the 16th of July, 622.[59] The city of Yathrib was renamed Medina, that is, Al-Madinah-an-Nabi, or the city of the Prophet.

Agapius[60] informs us that in the year 933 (A.D. 622), in the 11th year of the reign of Heraclius (620–621), the Arabs of Yathrib imposed as leader Mohammed, son of Abdullah. The information is not absolutely correct since Mohammed and his companions had only received asylum in Medina. The inhabitants did not submit to them. They welcomed Mohammed and gave him their support since, among other reasons, his mother hailed originally from Medina and belonged to a clan of the Khazraj tribe. And tribal obligation of bloodties assured for him protection and support. Moreover, there existed much envy and hatred on the part of the inhabitants of Medina for the Meccans, arising from Mecca's preeminent position as a trade center and its great commercial prosperity. Such feelings naturally led the denizens of Medina to support any cause that was hostile to the interests of Mecca, and the arrival of Mohammed provided them with some hopes of harming those interests if not of actually dominating that great city.

Many Jews who were expecting the arrival of a Messiah, and were consequently prepared for his coming, initially believed that Mohammed was the Messiah for whom they had been waiting for so long.

[58] Bevan, Mahomet and Islam, C.M.H., II, 313; Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 116; Montgomery Watt, Muhammed at Medina.

[59] Grummel, La Chronologie, p. 280.

[60] Agapius, Kitab-al-Unwan, pp. 196.

There were in Medina two Arab tribes, the Khasraj and the Abs. Hatred between them was intense and warfare constant. Mohammed succeeded in imposing his will on both tribes and eventually the animosity between them ceased.

The residents of Medina did not adopt initially the new religion en masse. There existed certainly a number of Mohammed's followers, known later as the Ansar (Supporters). Muslem adherents who had come with the Prophet, known as the Muhajirun (Emigrants) helped to swell the ranks.

The revelations of the Prophet soon assumed another character in Medina.[61] They contained not only political but social content, necessary for the organization and administration of a new society. Mohammed was no longer only the Prophet, but a community leader as well.

In the early stages of the movement, Muslems were the most peaceful of peoples. There was no desire or inclination whatsoever to attack Mecca or to impose the new faith by force. In addition to the innate fear and respect for the power of Mecca, all those who had fled to Medina could not think of making war on thei rbrethren and relatives who had remained in the former city.

The problem of feeding the new society arose very soon. Mohammed realized finally that the ban on the razzia which he had imposed on his people brought him into conflict with the ancient and respected customs of the Bedouins and made more difficult the problem of maintaining and sustaining his followers. Tempting caravans, heavily laden with merchandise, continued to pass through Medina and roused the cupidity of the needy faithful.[62] In view of this, Mohammed lifted the ban on razzia and permitted the very profitable profession to continue but on the condition that one-fifth of the spoils be given to the community for the needy and faithful.

In the second year of the Hegira and more precisely in the month of Rajab (December/January 623/24) at which time all hostilities were forbidden, a band of his followers suddenly fell upon and plundered a caravan on its way to Mecca. Faced with a great outcry, even in Medina itself, against the abhorrent act which had taken place in the month of the truce, Mohammed was forced to argue that a mistake had been made due to a misinterpretation of his orders.

[61] Nomicos, Introduction to the History of the Arabs, p. 57.

[62] Duchêsne, L'Eglise au VIe siècle, p. 416; Houdas, L'Islamisme, p. 43.

A few months later a vast caravan was due to arrive from Syria under the leadership of Abu Sufyan, head of the aristocratic and influential Umayyad branch of the Quraysh. Mohammed summoned volunteers to the number of 300 of whom 80 were Muhajirun or Emigrants to attack the caravan.[63] Abu-Sufyan got wind of the scheme and sent to Mecca for reinforcements. Some 900 men were dispatched of whom many were of the aristocracy of that city. The skirmish took place near the wells of the small town of Badr about 130 kilometres southwest of Medina in March 624. After a confusing and bloody battle the forces of Mecca were routed and left 70 of their number dead on the battlefield. The defeat was a terrible blow to Mecca, regardless of whether the caravan was saved in the end. It was a matter of prestige. In early 625, Abu Sufyan assembled 3000 warriors of Mecca and set out for Medina. Mohammed, who had been forewarned of the impending attack, prepared the defense and succeeded in throwing back the attackers.

Soon after these successive victories, Mohammed turned his attention to the Jews of Medina, many of whom he slaughtered, tohers of whom he forcefully proselytized or expelled. It is said that Mohammed took this step not only because the Jews were showing signs of turning against him, but that both his companions (Muhajirun) and the Ansars coveted the rich estates of the Jews to whom they were in any case deeply in debt.[64] Following this, Mohammed began his attacks on various other Jewish tribes. Some he massacred, others he expelled and those of whom he permitted to stay were obliged to pay a very heavy tax.[65] He was extremely harsh towards the Jews because they refused to follow him as he initially believed they would and because they began actively to oppose his schemes.

Gradually the belief that the monotheistic faith should be forced upon the idol worshippers and heathens began to take root. A policy aimed exclusively at the various idolatrous tribes in the Arabian peninsula was soon launched. This religious war would continue until the last heathen embraced Islam.[66]

In 629 Mohammed, accompanied by many faithful, visited Mecca to pay his respects to the holy site. The following year he attacked

[63] Bevan, Mahomet and Islam, C.M.H., II, 317.
[64] Lammens, Le Berceau de l'Islam, p. 155.
[65] Roth, Histoire du Peuple Juif, p. 176
[66] Houdas, L'Islamisme, p. 168.

and succeeded in seizing the city. But he was forced to make numerous concessions to obtain, initially, the toleration of the Quraysh and, subsequently, their adherence. Thus he retained the worship of the Black Stone and the yearly festive pilgrimage to Mecca. He himself, after first praying to the one and only God, next touched the Black Stone, the Palladium of the descendants of Abraham and of Ishmael. Then he proceeded seven times round the Kaaba and tasted of the water of the Zamzam well which was considered sacred. In such manner he established the ceremony for worship in Mecca for all time.[67]

In the meantime, an expedition was sent to Syria under the leadership of Zayd, Mohammed's emancipated slave, for a razzia but the army was annihilated at Mutah.[68] In the 9th year (630–631),[69] Mohammed himself decided to lead an expedition into Syria. According to Baladhuri,[70] Mohammed had learned that the Arabs of the tribes of Ghassan, Amilah and others, had joined forces with the Byzantines and were marching in the direction of Arabia. He quickly assembled an army and proceeded as far as Tebuk,[71] near the imperial frontier. Tabari maintains that while there he was informed that the Byzantine forces had returned to Damascus, and that he advanced no further. But we know that all this information is inaccurate since no expedition had been organized by the Byzantines against Arabia. The attempt by later Muslem chroniclers to glorify Mohammed explains the imaginery threat of Byzantium against the Arabs.

It is probably because of age that the Prophet preferred to stop. Moreover, Mohammed himself appears never to have planned or led a large expedition beyond the frontiers of Arabia.

He returned from Tabuk in which he had remained for 15 to 20 days during which time the tribes in control of the area of Adhruh[72]

[67] Nomicos, Introduction to the History of the Arabs, p. 42.

[68] See Volume I of this history, p. 313–4.

[69] There is a difference of opinion concerning the date and the purpose of this expedition. Some sources say 630 while others record 631 as the year. The 9th year of the Hegira begins on the 29th of April 630 and ends on April 8, 631.

[70] Baladhuri-Hitti, The Origins of the Islamic State, p. 92.

[71] Oasis of Hedjaz near the Red Sea, today a town of Saoudi Arabia.

[72] Region between Maan and Petra where formerly existed a large Roman military camp.

submitted to him and agreed to pay a tax. It is also reputed that the Christian chieftain of the Ailah[73] and other Arab tribes, Christian and Jewish, living near the frontier, hastened to give obeisance to him. They were permitted to retain their religious beliefs and their lands in consideration of an annual payment.[74]

Mohammed in 632 led a pilgrimage to Mecca and returned to Medina. Here he ordered the assembly of a military force to invade and plunder areas near the Byzantine frontier, specially in the area of Balka.[75] It is related that this razzia had as its purpose to avenge the Muslem defeat at Mutah. At the head of the army was placed Usamah-ibn-Zayd, the son of the leader who had lost his life in the battle of Mutah. It is also recorded that he summoned many tribes from various parts of Arabia to participate in the expedition. The forces congregated near Medina.

Mohammed in the meantime had fallen unexpectedly ill with high fever, probably of a malarial nature, to which he finally succumbed. He died in the house of his wife Aisha, daughter of Abu Bakr, on the 13th day of Rebi I, a Monday, of the 11th year of the Hegira, that is, June 8, 632,[76] the date most acceptable to modern scholars. According to Theophanes[77] in the year 6122 of the Creation (A.D. 632), in the 21st year of the reign of Heraclius (630/631), "Mohammed died, the leader of the Saracens and false Prophet."

Mohammed died in poverty and the few possessions he had passed to the brotherhood of the Muslems. He left 12 widows and eleven

[73] Abou'l-Féda, Vie du Prophète Mahomet.

[74] Bevan, op. cit., C.M.H., II, 326.

[75] A district of Arabia which had Busra as its capital. It belongs today to Jordan.

[76] Caetani, Annali Del'Islam, II, p. LXVIII; Calmette, Le Monde Féodal, p. 20; Brockelmann, Histoire des Peuples, p. 39; Nomicos, Introduction to the History etc., p. 50; Lambros, History of Greece, V, 710; Huart, Histoire des Arabes, I, 181. The date 632 is universally accepted. There is however disagreement on the day. Elie Bar Sinaya, p. 81, writes that Mohammed died on a Monday, the last day of the month of Safar, i.e., May 26, 632. But the last day of the month Safar of the 11th year falls on a Tuesday. Grumel maintains that Mohammed died on June 11. Wellhausen argues that the 12th day of Rebi I corresponds with June 7, 632, whereas Bevan, in the C.M.H., II, p. 327, states that Mohammed died on Monday, June 632, but the 7th of June, 632, was a Sunday.

[77] Theophanes, p. 333.

concubines. His two sons had died young and his daughter Fatimah had married his first cousin Ali ibn-abi-Talib.

Despite what Theophanes records, when Mohammed died he was neither commander of the Arabs nor their religious leader. He was the leader and prophet only of the Hijaz. The Qurayshites were destined, after his death, to make of him a national prophet and leader.[78]

3.

Mohammed was of average stature. He possessed a striking face with a broad head and a thick beard. Abul Feda describes his eyes as black, and as many of his compatriots were accustomed to do, he dyed his eyelashes and eyebrows black and his nails red.[79]

It is not an easy matter to describe the character of Mohammed.[80] He was by temperament sickly, nervously tense, with a tendency to hysterical outbursts. He would frequently be seized by a fit accompanied with a high fever. During these fitful outbursts, which were considered but symptoms of divine inspiration, he said he would hear voices communicating to him the commands of God. He was undoubtedly an epileptic and Theophanes so describes him.[81]

It is extremely difficult in a few lines to described the new religion, a faith that today embraces hundreds of millions of believers. Nor is it the intention of the present study. But I will attempt to give a brief outline of the main concepts of this new religion.

It cannot be argued that the teachings of Mohammed derive exclusively from his own imagination. Mohammed had received many of his ideas from Christianity and from Judaism. His primary aim was to destroy the idols, to terminate stone worship, belief in the stars, and polytheism generally. He also tried to abolish the old social theory whereby the Arabs lived in which each tribe constituted an independent and self-contained community. To him, society would be the sum total of all those who believed or who were subject to the faithful. Islam signifies submission to the will of God and a Muslim is one who submits to this will. The religion of Mohammed is

[78] Lammens, Le Berceau de l'Islam, p. 11.
[79] Caussin de Perceval, Essai sur l'histoire des Arabes, III, 333.
[80] Nöldeke in Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlands, XXI, p. 298.
[81] Theophanes, p. 334.

well adaptable to the customs and morals of the Arab inhabitants of the peninsula.[82]

The first tenet is the existence of but one God (Allah) and the prophet of Allah is Mohammed. This is the basic revelation. Monotheism is absolute. In his belief in the absolute and supreme God, Mohammed diverges from Christianity which contained the theory of the Holy Trinity thus distorting the monotheistic credo. And his brand of monotheism precluded any possibility of division that plagued the Christians, [83] such for example as that concerning the nature of God, the mysteries of the Holy Trinity, iconoduly and the like. On this point Mohammed had adhered to the Hebraic faith more closely. From Christianity he borrowed fasting, atonement and a life after death,[84] that is to say, certain basic tenets that were to enable him to reform Arab society.

These basic tenets include 1) One God, 2) a profession of faith by reciting the first chapter of the Koran, 3) prayer in public or at home five times a day and recitation of the surahs (chapters) of the Koran in a kneeling position with the face looking in the direction of Mecca. Initially ritual prayer was twice a day, then three times, but much later it was five times a day.[85] In the early phase, due to his great affection for Jerusalem, Mohammed had ruled that prayer be made facing that city, but later, after his failure to convert the Jews to the new religion and the recognition of Mecca as the holiest of cities, Mohammed established prayer facing the latter. 4) Fasting during the entire month of Ramadan (the 9th month of the Muslim year). 5) Alms-giving which evolved into an obligatory tax to the State.[86] Mohammed had early established the practice for aid to the needy and the sick of the Muslim community. 6) Pilgrimage to Mecca, an ancient pre-Islamic custom, which Mohammed incorporated by the agreement that he made with the Qurayshites in 630. 7) Holy War (the djihad). In the early stages the holy war was one of the means to destroy idolatry, and was to continue until the heathens embraced Islam.[87] It was not directed against the peoples

[82] Bréhier, La nouvelle crise réligieuse, V, 126.
[83] Lopez, Naissance de l'Europe, p. 82.
[84] Tomadakis, Syllabus of Byzantine Studies, p. 36.
[85] Brockelmann, Histoire des Peuples, p. 24.
[86] Amantos, History of the Byzantine State, I, 313.
[87] Houdas, L'Islamisme, p. 43.

of the Holy Scriptures (Bible, New Testament). These could retain their religion as long as they became "dhimmis," subject people who enjoyed the protection of the Muslims. Their freedom and security were assured as long as they contracted to pay the "Gizya" or the head and property taxes. "Dhimmah" (from which dhimmis derives, or those subjected to the Dhimmah) is roughly equivalent to the "pactum" or contract for protection.[88] Holy war was the duty of all Muslems, and at the same time a source of income for the faithful. But with time the holy war deviated markedly from its original intent.

The new religion demanded of its adherents besides faith, kindness and beneficence. It required respect for the life of the aged, the priests, rabbis, monks and children,[89] faith in a future life which for the believer would be a blessed one since virtue was rewarded not only morally but materially and evil would be punished. And finally, it forbade the consumption of wine, the source of many evils.

The Koran is the record of inspired utterances made by Mohammed and the new religion. Mohammed did not record these himself, and as has been already pointed out, it is not known whether he could write. He dictated his revelations to his followers. These were preserved, written either on palm leaves or sheepskin, or inscribed on tablets of stone. Various other utterances were preserved by "memorizing" the sayings of the Prophet by his companions to whom he had made the revelations. The need was soon felt that these doctrines had to be preserved, specially after the death of several of his companions and of the Prophet himself. As soon as Abu Bakr became Caliph he ordered that the scattered portions of the revelations be collected and entrusted Zayd ibn-Thabit, formerly Mohammed's secretary, with the task. But in the third Caliphate, in 650, Uthman commanded that a revision be made because of the defective nature of the various readings, and he himself supervised the work of the committee headed by Zayd for the purpose. The revised Koran henceforth remained unaltered. Yet the Koran is not a uniform text. There is neither legal nor chronological unity. It is a book replete with contradiction, obscurity and much repetition.[90]

[88] Fattal, Le statut legal des non-Musulmans, pp. 72–74.
[89] Houdas, L'Islamisme, p. 169.
[90] Amantos, History of the Byzantine State, I, 312.

Islam, as in the case of Christianity, was well adapted to the needs of the age in which it was born. Its principles and tenets were sufficiently abstract to satisfy the needs of the people and its promises sufficiently concrete to attract the masses.

Mohammed had no political ambitions whatsoever. When the course of events made of him a political and religious leader, his efforts were directed to acquiring the willing assistance and cooperation of his followers.

The work achieved by Mohammed may have been primitive and crude, but it carried with it a remarkable power and was above all realistic. He destroyed the traditions by which each tribe constituted an independent, self-contained social organism, accepting no alien membership but its own and which was hostilely inclined towards other tribes. His achievement did not disintegrate after his death. This is striking proof that Mohammed gave form and substance to the needs and the demands of his age. Through Mohammed the Arabs began to acquire a certain political unity.

Mohammed provided new direction for existing currents in Arabia. His mission was a response to the urgent moral, social and political needs of the peninsula, He did not have in mind the establishment of an Arab state or the conquest of other lands. His early teachings were purely ethical and humane. His efforts were directed to instituting a moral code of behaviour for the Arabs, to uprooting their weaknesses and to cultivating their natural faculties. He directed his sermons specially to the person with both good points and weaknesses. If subsequently Islam deviated from its original intent and aims, this was due to the successors of Mohammed alone. Mohammed was, in short, an outstanding personality and a remarkable humanist.

The West certainly misunderstood the message of the new religion and completely underestimated its power, All believed that it was but a new Christian heresy. John Damascene also treated Islam not as a new religion but as a heresy. Byzantine chroniclers showed surprisingly little interest in Mohammed. In Italy, too, Islam was considered a heretical sect closely allied to Arianism. In the "Divine Comedy", Dante treats Mohammed as a heretic and guilty of many scandals.[91]

[91] Vasiliev, Histoire de l'Empire Byzantin, I, 274.

The later successes of the Arabs gave rise, as usual, to the birth of a large corpus of oracles and prophecies. The famous alchemist and mathematician Stephanus of Alexandria, a personal friend of Heraclius and teacher at Constantinople, prophesied that the Saracens were destined to rule for 309 years. Constantine Porphyrogenitus writes that the Saracens "came out" (he probably meant migrated) on September 3, the 12th Indiction (A.D. 623–624), in the 12th year of Heraclius' reign (A.D. 621/622) and in the 6130th year of the Creation (A.D. 620/621), on the basis of the computations of the mathematician Stephanus.[92] Leo the Grammarian records that in the 12th year of Mohammed, and the year 6130 of the Creation (620/621), the 10th Indiction (621/622), Thursday, the 3rd of September, the Saracens came out and that on the basis of the prophecy of Stephanus would reign for 309 years.[93] It is understandable that the peoples of the West who believed implicitly in the prophetic arts and suffered so much at the hands of the Muslim invaders should count impatiently the years which they were destined to wait, on the basis of the prophecies, for the final destruction of the faithful of Mohammed.

4.

On the death of Mohammed, the situation soon deteriorated. Forty-eight hours after his death the Muslim community was threatened with dissolution. The superb structure of the new society built by Mohammed was sorely tried.

During his illness, Mohammed had delegated Abu Bakr to lead the public prayers, but he had not clearly designated anyone as his successor. It should be remembered that on the basis of a very ancient tradition, the leader of a tribe or community, the Sheik, was always chosen. As Wellhausen observes, power could remain in the clan or the tribe, but not necessarily in the family. Lammens emphasizes that on the basis of the principles of the Arabic tradition as well as of Islam, power was not deemed to be a kind of human property against which the rights of inheritance could be raised.[94]

The first conflict occurred between the Muhajirun (the Emigrants)

[92] De Administrando Imperio, p. 80.
[93] Chronographia, p. 153.
[94] Le Califat de Yazid etc.

and the Ansar (the Supporters). The Ansars assembled immediately and demanded that one of their members be appointed as Mohammed's successor because, as they asserted, if they had not given the Prophet and his followers asylum, Islam would have perished. But the Muhajirun on the contrary maintained that Mohammed's successor should be selected from one of them since they were the first of the believers and most of them were from the same tribe as the Prophet. Some years later, these two conflicting parties were to coalesce into one body known as the Companions (Sahabah).[95]

Against these claimants there were others, known as the Legitimists, who maintained that the legal heir of Mohammed was Ali, son-in-law of the Prophet (he was the husband of Fatimah) and his first cousin. Ali was moreover one of the two or three first believers who had accompanied Mohammed. These were followed by yet another claimant in the form of the aristocracy of the Quraysh ites through their mouthpiece Abu-Sufyan who had held the reins of power in the pre-Islamic period and on which grounds they asserted their right to the successorship.

The threatened dissolution of the Muslim community was avoided thanks to the triumvirate of Abu Bakr, Umar and Abu-Ubaydah,[96] who succeeded firstly in persuading the Ansar to support them, then excluded the claims of the supporters of Ali, precisely on that principle which required that a leader be chosen by the democratic process. Abu Bakr was chosen as the first Caliph with title "Khalifah rasul Allah," that is, successor of the delegate of God. The exclusion of Ali was deemed subsequently as a usurpation on the part of the Companions against all legality.[97]

Abu Bakr was born circa 570 and was then about 61 or 62 years of age. He was of aristocratic birth and belonged to the great tribe of the Quraysh. This to a certain extent assuaged the ambitions of that tribe. Abu Bakr was a prosperous merchant[98] who gradually squandered his fortune on Mohammed and his cause.[99]

He was short, thin and with rounded stooped shoulders. His hair was sparse and white and this he dyed red. He was rather spirited,

[95] Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 140.
[96] Lammens, Le Triumvirat Abu Bakr, Umar, etc.
[97] Becker, The Expansion of the Saracens, C.M.H., II, 333.
[98] Tabari, Chronique, ed. Zotenberg, III, 357.
[99] El Maqdisi, ed. Huart, V, 81.

resolute and had strong will-power. Abu Bakr was an able leader of the nation who could in moments of crisis assume all responsibility effectively.[100] But at the same time he was kind and gentle and generally advised moderation in his dealings, always striving to avoid injustice to any party. He was known as the "virtuous" or "he who respects the truth."[101] He enjoyed vast authority and respect. He was, after all, one of the first to believe in Mohammed, and his daughter Aishah was the favourite wife of the Prophet.

The Caliphate of Abu Bakr lasted two years and several months.[102] According to the general belief he died in Medina as the result of a fever, but others, among whom Suyuti (on the basis of Ibn Saad and Al-Hakam), believe that he was poisoned on the night of the 22nd day of the month of Jumadha II, a Tuesday (?), in the 13th year of the Hegira, that is, on August 23, 634.[103] Al Wakidi who relies on Aishah's story maintains that he died of fever. Theophanes also records the death of "Abubaharou" in the year of the Creation 6125 (A.D. 633), the 24th year of the reign of Heraclius (633/634).

When Abu Bakr assumed power, he was confronted by a chaotic and very dangerous situation. The various Arab tribes had seceded and renounced the supremacy of Medina.

In the meantime, the troops that had been assembled to raid Syria (or rather the border regions of Syria) were prepared for the march. The army according to Yakubi numbered some 3,000 men and

[100] Lammens, Le Triumvirat etc.

[101] Montgomery Watt, in Encycl. of Islam, n. ed.

[102] Theophanes, p. 336; Cedrenus, p. 745, who says "he reigned as emir" for 2½ years; Eutychius records 2 years, 3 months, 22 days; Mirkhond says 2 years and 4 months; Makrizi 2 years, 3 months and 5 days; El-Maqdisi 2 years, 3 months and 9 days; Hamsa 2 years, 3 months, 8 days; Al-Makine 2 years 3 months and 9 days; Michael the Syrian 2 years, 7 months; the Chronicle of A.D. 724, 2 years and 6 months; the Chronicle of 819, 3 years and 3 months; and the Chronicle of Edessa, 2 years and 7 months.

[103] Maçoudi, Les Prairies d'or, IV, 175–176; Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, p. 175; Huart, Histoire des Arabes, II, 150; whereas Caetani in Chronographia Islamica maintains the 21st of Jumadha II (August 22). On the other hand another Syrian source states that he died on Monday, the 8th of Jumadha II (Baethgen, Fragmente Syrischer usw., p. 110). Hence the 22nd of Jumadha II of the 13th year of the Hegira, that is, August 23, 634, is not a Tuesday but Monday. Jumadha II begins on Monday, August 2, 634. Therefore either the day of the week which is generally accepted today is incorrect or the date is wrong.

1,000 horse. But Ibn-Al-Athir, ibn-Khaldun, Suyuti and others maintain that the strength of the detachment did not surpass 700 men.[104] According to Yakubi the army was to invade Palestine and to undertake a great razzia in the area of Balka.

Three days after the demise of the Prophet, Abu Bakr announced that the army would set out, thus fulfilling the wish of Mohammed, despite the dangerous situation that existed internally in Arabia. It is reported that Abu Bakr's decision was motivated not only by the wishes of Mohammed, for it appeared to be a means whereby most of the Ansars would be temporarily far removed from Medina.[105]

Umar who was to take part in the expedition demanded, also on behalf of the army, that the expedition be postponed because of the abnormal internal situation. He pointed out that since this army constituted the main body of Islam it would be unwise and dangerous to leave the Community without an ample defense. But Abu Bakr insisted on the fulfillment of the Prophet's wish. The Ansars then asked the Caliph to replace Usamah because of his youth and inexperience. Again Abu Bakr insisted on retaining Usamah because Mohammed had selected him and it was not possible that the Prophet had made a mistake in his choice.[106] Then the Caliph called upon the leaders of the army not to forsake their religion by slaying women or the aged. He also demanded strict obedience and expected that the area into which they were about to advance would not be destroyed.

The army began its advance on June 26, 632,[107] but precisely where they had gone remains unknown.[108] As Goeje[109] rightly maintains, there is considerable confusion as to where Usamah went with his forces. Some sources relate that his army was involved close to the Byzantine frontier with local Arab tribes that refused to cooperate with him. It seems that he did not enter the area of Balka. Mirkhond reports that he marched as far as the Gaza (?) district but because he could find no enemies (!) he withdrew.

[104] Caetani, Annali dell'Islam, II, 587; Suyuti, p. 74.
[105] Caetani, op. cit., II, 588
[106] Mirkhond, ed. Arbuthnot, pp. 12–13.
[107] Caetani, op. cit., II, p. 589. Caussin de Perceval, III, p. 343, writes that the army departed on June 24.
[108] Brockelmann, Histoire des Peuples, p. 48.
[109] Goeje, Mémoire sur la conquête de la Syrie, p. 20.

Caetani[110] writes that the expedition lasted 33 days all told, but according to Goeje its duration was 70 days.

In the meanwhile, the rebellion, which is known as the riddah (defection) in Arabic, had assumed alarming proportions. Although the Muslims maintained that Arabia was united at the time of the death of Mohammed, the Prophet had not in fact either united the country or imposed Islam upon it.[111] The different tribes that inhabited the Arabian peninsula had either accepted Islam or, as was mostly the case, were subjected to it by fear of the power of the Muslims. But each tribe had its own reasons for mistrusting the others.[112]

The secession in Yemen began before the death of Mohammed with the appearance of a new prophet. Many other tribes that were subject to Mohammed had resented paying the tax to Medina (Zakah). The Prophet's death gave them reason for refusing to pay the imposition on the grounds of automatic dissolution of an agreement arising from the death of one of the parties to that agreement.[113] Other tribes envied the growth of Medina's influence but feared to make any moves because of the strength of the Islamic faction. Some of the tribes that dwelled near Medina, and principally the Abs, took advantage of the absence of Usamah's army and suddenly launched an attack on the city but were thrown back with serious losses.

With the death of Mohammed the rebellion spread to the tribes of Uman, of Bahrayn, to the Yamamah of central Arabia, the Hadramawt and Yemen. Several insurrections also occurred in Mecca, in Taif and other towns.

Arab chroniclers argue that the causes for the defection were of a religious nature. But this is erroneous. The causes were firstly economic and secondly a matter of authority and reputation, and then religious. The different nomadic tribes were discontented with the compulsory tax they had to pay. Many who had become Muslim would continue to pray but would not pay the dues for the Muslim community (Suyuti). Envy on the part of many towns for the advancement and growth of Medina as a political and religious center

[110] Caetani, Chronographia Islamica, I, p. 111.
[111] Becker, The Expansion of the Saracens, C.M.H., II, 335.
[112] Muir, Annals of the Early Caliphate, p. 60.
[113] Wellhausen, Skizzen usw., p. 7; Lewis, B., Les Arabes, p. 47.

added to the resentment. Various prophets began to appear in the more powerful tribes of Arabia. Al-Aswad in the Yemen, who also was a monotheist, refused to embrace Islam. Musaylimah of the Hanifah tribe appeared in the central regions of the peninsula. He was defeated and slain in a bitter and bloody clash in May/June 633.[114] The prophetess Sajah of the Tamim tribe in Bahrayn and Tulayhah of the Asad tribe in north-central Arabia were yet others.

Abu Bakr formed nine detachments which he sent against the various dissident tribes.[115] The main force was that led by Khalid ibn-al-Walid, the hero of these campaigns, known as the "sword of God." Having subjected the Banu Tayyi and the Banu Asad, he next turned to central Arabia which he subdued after considerable sanguine fighting. Caetani records that in the 12th year of the Hegira, 155 Companions of the Prophet perished on the battlefields. The losses of both the secessionists and the Muslims were considerable.

The massive opposition ended with victory in the Hadramawt. The insurrection had been for the most part overcome. Abu Bakr who had displayed great determination throughout this trying period was merciful with the leaders of the secession many of whom adopted Islam.[116] The peninsula appeared to be finally united by the sword of Khalid. For months the country had been changed into a vast armed camp, and that was the danger. With the imposition of Islam, intertribal bloodshed was forbidden.

What was to become of this vast force of armed warriors? Where and whom could they plunder? What would the overflowing force of these warlike and hungry men bring in their wake?

[114] Caetani, Chronographia Islamica, I, 121.
[115] Mirkhond, ed. Arbuthnot.
[116] Montgomery Watt, in Encyclop. of Islam, n. ed. p. 115.

CHAPTER III

EARLY INCURSIONS OF THE ARABS

Nicephorus[117] relates as follows the first incursions of the Arabs in the frontier regions nearest to Arabia, "The Saracens began to devastate all before them ...". He dates the event in the year of the Creation 6126 (A.D. 634), in the 7th Indiction (September 1, 633 – August 31, 634).

The present chapter and the following two will deal with the causes of the incursions which resulted eventually in the loss to Byzantium of the eastern provinces including Palestine, Syria, Mesopotamia and Egypt, as well as with a brief treatment of the collapse of Persia. This will be followed by a chapter investigating the reasons for the remarkable success of a nomadic people that could hardly have hoped even in its wildest flights of fancy for such resounding triumphs.

The lack of contemporary sources and the complete confusion caused by Arabic works handicaps the entire narrative and the possibility for accurate dating of those memorable events.

It is certainly incorrect to maintain that the invasions of the Arabs were generated by religious fervour. The Arabs who had set out to invade neighbouring lands consisted for the most part of tribes that were not even Muslim. This problem will be studied at length in a later chapter.

The inhabitants of the Byzantine Empire were rarely on good terms with their government, and the Eastern chroniclers who disliked the Byzantines intensely strove to shroud the events with a certain fanciful, divine mantle.

Theophanes writes that in the same year[118] there occurred an earthquake in Palestine and that there appeared in the sky in the

[117] Nicephorus, Chronographia Brevis, ed. de Boor, p. 99.

[118] Theophanes, the year of the Creation 6124 (A.D. 632), the 23rd year of the reign of Heraclius (632/633), the 2nd year of Abu Bakr (633/634), p. 336.

southern horizon a "dokites" (presumably a comet)[119] shaped like a sword which foretold the victory of the Arabs. It remained visible for 30 days. Cedrenus and George the Monk record the same phenomenon.[120]

Agapius relates that an earthquake took place in Palestine and that a fiery column appeared in the heavens which moved from East to West. The Séert Chronicle repeats the same story and adds that it was in the shape of a sword, it could be seen in the sky for 35 days, and that everyone interpreted the phenomenon as a divine prophecy that the Arabs would prevail.[121] Michael the Syrian and Bar Hebraeus[122] write identically with Theophanes.

There exists, therefore, a tradition which survived in both the Byzantine and several Eastern chroniclers concerning the appearance of a comet as a divine sign predicting that the Arabs would prevail.

I.

It is indeed difficult to decipher the actual causes which induced the Arabs to invade the territories of what were then deemed the two most powerful Empires, the Byzantine and the Persian.

The Byzantine chroniclers Theophanes and Cedrenus[123] maintain that the Arabs were urged on by the Saracens who had not received the "roga", that is, the yearly subsidies which the Byzantines were wont to give them.[124]

It is conceivable that one of the reasons behind the invasion by the Arabs was the invitation made by their kinsmen the Saracens and their promises for plunder.[125] It could be expected that those Saracens of the frontier regions, whose main source of income was the annual imperial "roga," would need to supplement this by forag-

[119] De Boor, in Theophanes, p. 636.

[120] George the Monk, Chronicle, ed. de Boor, p. 707; Cedrenus, Synopsis, ed. Bonn, p. 745.

[121] Agapius, ed. Vasiliev, pp. 194 and 209; Chronique de Séert, ed. Scher, pp. 260/580.

[122] Michael the Syrian, ed. Chabot; Abu'l Faradj Bar Hebraeus, ed. Wallis Budge, p. 93.

[123] Theophanes, p. 336; Cedrenus, p. 751.

[124] See Volume I of the present history, p. 314.

[125] Becker, The Expansion of the Saracens, C.M.H., II, 339.

ing raids, and since they were not strong enough to do it alone, to seek the aid of other Arabs.[126]

Armenian and various other Eastern chroniclers give a very curious version. According to Sébéos and Thomas Ardzrouni,[127] the Arabs were invited and guided by the Israelis. The Jews who had fled from Edessa[128] found refuge in Arabia and paid obeisance to Mohammed, without however embracing Islam. They then sent a delegation to Heraclius which was reported to have said, "God has given as inheritance this land (Palestine and Syria) to our father Abraham. We are his children. You must therefore return it to us, else we shall invade your country." But Heraclius refused. Following this, the Ishmaelites and the Israelis invaded the land of the Romans.

Conditions in the frontier areas of Byzantium and Persia were extremely favorable for the Arabs. Already from as early as the first Century the Arabs were on the move, especially the nomads of the Nadj and the Hedjaz, because of the aridness which was so rife in the center of the Arabian peninsula. Various clans, even tribes, began to settle in Syria and Mesopotamia.[129] It was a gradual uninterrupted migration of the inhabitants of the poor and waterless soil of Arabia to richer lands with Mediterranean cultivation.[130] The spread of the Arab tribes occurred by gradual stages.[131] In most parts of Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia many encampments of Arabs could be found as well as Arab villages. The peoples dwelling in these regions were largely Semitic, hence closely related by origin and language with the Arabs.[132]

In the strip of territory encircling the Syrian desert several tribes, the Ghassanides specially, had settled. In northern Syria and in Mesopotamia one found the Taghlib, the Qays Aylan and the Tayyi. To the East were the Bakr, the Tanukh, the Iyiad and the Lakhmids. All these tribes, as has been pointed out, had for the most part become Christians.

[126] Caetani, Annali dell'Islam, II, pp. 1173–4.
[127] Sébéos, ed. Macler, p. 95 ff., Ardzrouni, ed. Brosset, p. 89.
[128] See Volume I, p. 238.
[129] Bréhier, Vie et Mort de Byzance, p. 55.
[130] Guillou, Prise de Gaza par les Arabes.
[131] Lewis, Les Arabes etc., p. 51.
[132] Vasiliev, Histoire de l'Empire Byzantine, I, 277; Geoje, Memoire sur la conquête, p. 1; Abel, La Prise de Jerusalem par les Arabes, p. 109.

It is understandable, therefore, that the potential invaders of those areas would encounter peoples of the same race, and often of the same tribe, who spoke a language akin to their own.

But the main causes of the Arab incursions were economic and social. As stated in Chapter II, hunger was a permanent threat to the nomads of Arabia. The Arabs as a consequence were forced to turn elsewhere beyond the borders of a hunger-ridden country unable to supply their basic needs.[133] Rustem, commander of the Persian army, is reported to have said to the Arabs that "hunger has drawn you out of the desert."[134] In Chapter II it has been pointed out that the razzia was a means by which to satisfy the needs of the nomads. But once the Islamic peace was imposed in Arabia no razzias were permitted in the peninsula. As a result, such means for obtaining food supplies by the hungry inhabitants were precluded.

During the entire period of Mohammed's life and the years that immediately followed his death in the period of the secession, the military spirit of the Arabs had reached a feverish pitch. The entire peninsula had become one vast military camp. The violence that pervaded the land, and the blood that had been shed had stirred the spirit and the passions of the different tribes. All this surplus energy must needs be channeled and soon redirected to beyond the borders, otherwise there existed the immediate danger of new intertribal warfare, vendettas and the like. Fatricide was to be avoided at all costs. It was a social problem that required an urgent solution. And Abu Bakr rightly understood that the only manner in which the alarming situation could be overcome was to redirect the forces of armed and war-impassioned Arabs across the border.[135]

Then occurred the timely appeal from the different Christian Arabs whose annual "roga" had been cut off by Byzantium. And so, hunger, roused passions, war fever, the threat of social upheaval that hung menacingly over Arabia, the inherent desire for loot, and the need for binding even closer the ties between the tribes of the peninsula were the real reasons for starting the incursions into neighbouring territories in which resided peoples closely akin to them. Religion and the desire to spread the faith of Islam played

[133] Caetani, Annali dell'Islam, II, p. 1083.
[134] Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, pp. 411–412; Maqdisi, ed. Huart, V, 182.
[135] Bury, History etc., II, 262.

no role in the decision to undertake marauding expeditions.[136] It is probable that religion was used as a unifying link and common ground uniting the various tribes.[137] But there was no religious fanaticism or driving force to urge them on. Mohammed had left no legacy or directive to spread Islam beyond the confines of the Arabian peninsula. Moreover, there existed only a relatively small number of practicing Muslims of whom most had remained in Medina. The greater mass of invaders consisted of Bedouins or Christians, or some partially converted Muslim Arabs. Vasiliev[138] notes a complete lack of religious fervour or enthusiasm. The invaders merely sought plunder. Yakubi points this out when he relates that the first Caliph looked upon these raids as great razzias.

2.

Soon after Abu Bakr had prevailed and the insurrection of central Arabia had been quelled, the leader of the Bakr tribe, Al-Muthanna ben-Haritha, who became a Muslim once he learned of the crushing of the rebellion, took advantage of the chaotic conditions then existing in Persia and plundered a small area of that country. Muthanna asked for reinforcements from Abu Bakr. Abu then ordered Khalid, who had recently crushed the rebellion in central Arabia, to proceed to the area and lead the expedition. Khalid had 800–900 men, but the force quickly grew after the first successful raids to 10,000. Muthanna who with detachments of the Banu Bakr and Banu Tayyi led a force of 2,000 men was placed under the orders of Khalid. His army also soon surpassed 8,000 in number, so that when Khalid set out from Iraq the total force of the Arabs amounted to 18,000 men.[139]

The Persians were not in a position to oppose the Arabs. Independently of the local conditions existing in the country, the Arabs were looked upon only as raiders or robbers whose sole aim was plunder. Moreover, the Persian army had no camel force at its dis-

[136] Vasiliev, Histoire de l'Empire Byzantin, I, 275.
[137] Becker, The Expansion of the Saracens, C.M.H., II, 332.
[138] Op. cit., I, 275.
[139] Rawlinson, The Seventh Oriental Monarchy, p. 551.

posal nor an army suited to desert warfare, after the abolition of the Lakhmid dynasty, that could defend the desert region against the invaders.[140]

Together with Muthanna, after defeating various Arab-Persian detachments, Khalid penetrated deeply into the frontier regions of Persia which he systematically plundered. Soon his forces reached Hirah,[141] the capital city of the area. Battle was given with the Arab-Persian armies led, according to Tabari, by a certain Azatzumbe. With the latter's defeat the city was surrendered but escaped pillage by paying the Arabs a sum variously estimated at from 60 to 100,000 gold coins.[142] According to some historians Hirah surrendered in May/June of 633,[143] whereas others maintain that it took place in October 633.[144] The latter date is probably more correct since the rebellion in central Arabia was quelled in March/April 633, hence Khalid could have entered these areas in May 633. Moreover, after various incursions Khalid was recalled in the summer of 634.

Following the conquest of Hirah, Khalid advanced deeper into the country, occupying several oases and villages of the Iraqi desert, and finally reached the city of Anbar.[145] After driving out the Persian garrison he made an agreement with its inhabitants for payment of an annual tribute.

Soon after, Khalid was ordered to proceed to Syria, while Muthanna was left in command. The latter was forced on the defensive by the aggressiveness of the Persians.

The army of Muthanna had been reinforced by various Christian Arab tribes of Mesopotamia.

[140] Glubb, The Great Arab Conquest, p. 125.

[141] An ancient oasis in the desert, situated east of the Euphrates, which grew into a city and capital of the Kingdom of the Lakhmids. The word is of Syriac origin and denoted a military encampment of tents. Traces of the city survive southeast of the modern town of Mesed-Ali.

[142] Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, pp. 390–391; Macoudi, ed. Barbier de Maynard, I, 216; Spuler Iran, u.s.w.

[143] Caussin de Perceval, Essai etc., III, 353; Müller, Der Islam u.s.w. pp. 220–221; Glubb, The Great Arab Conquest, p. 128.

[144] Caetani, Annali dell'Islam, II, p. LXIX.

[145] A city on the left bank of the Euphrates of strategic and economic importance. The ruins of the city are to be seen at a distance of some 5 kilometers northwest of Al-Falludja.

3.

It is extremely difficult to relate the military campaigns of this period. The Byzantine chroniclers dismiss events in a few lines, and the primary sources are the Arabians. As previously stated, none of these is contemporary with the period, and the events they record were derived from oral traditions. But independently of the fact, the Arabs have such a tendency for myth and exaggeration that it is only with extreme caution and selectivity that one can find some reasonable chronological order in the chain of events for the period. Fortunately, some good work has been done with the confusing mass of information in the fine studies of Goeje and Caetani.

Soon after he returned from the annual pilgrimage to Mecca,[146] Abu Bakr set about collecting an army for raids into Syria and Palestine.

The report that the expedition was prepared with great detail and care is, in my opinion, erroneous, since it involved plundering raids and nothing more serious, and such minute preparation would seem unnatural and purposeless.

Abu Bakr called upon all the tribes of Mecca, of the Yemen, Hadramawt, Nadj and the Hedjaz to send volunteers. According to Baladhuri,[147] he invited them to participate in a holy war, but at the same time the possibilities for plunder awakened in them a wave of enthusiasm. It should be borne in mind that Baladhuri wrote more than 200 years after the event. There existed no case for a holy war in 633. It was to be a grand razzia, and nothing more.

As sufficient volunteers were assembled at Medina, he would designate a leader and dispatch the force in the direction of Syria and Palestine.[148]

It is true that the version given by the Byzantine, Arab and other Eastern chroniclers does not agree with such an interpretation of the event. Theophanes[149] writes that in 633 Abubacharus (Abu Bakr) sent four generals. According to Michael the Syrian, Agapius,

[146] Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, p. 165; Tiqtaqa, ed. Amar, p. 123; Caetani, Annali dell'Islam, II, p. 1120.
[147] Op. cit., p. 165; Chronicle of Eutychius, p. 1093.
[148] Caetani, op. cit., II, 1168.
[149] Theophanes, p. 336.

Al-Makine, Eutychius and the 1234 Chronicle,[150] four commanders at the head of four detachments were dispatched in different directions. But the Arab chroniclers give a different picture. The army was gathered at Al-Jurf, near Medina, where Abu Bakr presented to each leader a banner and designated the specific area in which each army was to operate.[151] Also that there were only three detachments (it being assumed that the army of Khalid was then in Mesopotamia) that were destined for Syria.

There exists some discrepancy concerning the leaders of the expeditions. Baladhuri states that Abu Bakr named as the three commanders Khalid ibn-Sayd, Amr ibn-al-As and Shurahbil. At the intervention of Umar, Khalid was replaced by Yazid ibn Sufyan. Baladhuri also records another version whereby Amr was sent later with reinforcements. According to Tabari, the three leaders were Abu Ubaydah, Khalid and Shurahbil.

The Arab versions relate that Abu Bakr gave instructions that no old folk, women or children were to be harmed, also that fruit-bearing trees were not to be cut down, animals not to be slain, and cultivated areas were not to be devastated.[152]

According to Baladhuri, the armies were assembled on the 1st of Safar, the 13th year (April 6, 634), and Abu Ubaydah conducted the prayer. But such a date cannot be correct in view of the fact that the Arabs had begun the invasion towards the end of 633.[153]

Baladhuri further relates that the Damascus area was the objective of the army of Yazid, the Jordan River area that of Shurahbil, and Amr was to invade Southern Palestine. In the event the three contingents were fighting in the same area, the generalissimo would be that leader in whose designated area the battle was to be fought.

It is my belief that the different contingents marched out of Medina as soon as each was formed. Irrespective, however, of whether they were fully prepared or not, it would be necessary to

[150] Michael the Syrian, II, 413; Agapius, pp. 193/453; Al-Makine, p. 19; Eutychius, p. 1093; 1234 Chronicle, p. 188.

[151] Baladhuri, op. cit., pp. 166–167; Tabari, ed. Zotenberg, III, 229; 1234 Chronicle, p. 188.

[152] Maçoudi, op. cit., IV, 186–187; Tabari, op. cit., III, 229; Eutychius, p. 1093; 1234 Chronicle, p. 188.

[153] It has been argued by Caetani that the year is incorrect, hence the 1st of Safar, of the 12th year was April 17, 633. But then the wars of secession had, for the most part, only just been crushed.

send them off in successive waves since it was not feasible to feed such a large number of troops at one time. The first to leave was the contingent of Yazid.[154] Other sources (Tabari and Ibn Khaldoun) record that Khalid-ibn-Sayd was the first to depart and that Yazid's troops were sent to reinforce Khalid's army (See Note II).

Yazid, at the head of 3,000 men, followed the well established caravan route, the Tebuk-Maan-Amman road, leading to the Balka region and the military road Bosra-Damascus. His army consisted of volunteers from Mecca and the Hedjaz,[155] and most probably set out towards the end of the autumn of 633. This is the most likely date since camels, the main transport and military beast of the Arabs, can survive without water for 10 to 20 days. Moreover, the first rains would bring the budding of grass sufficient for the grazing of camels. This dating, according to Guillou, nearly coincides with that of Theophanes and other Syrian sources.[156]

Amr ibn-al-As with about 3,000 men advanced after Yazid and took the route leading to Aila, along the Red Sea, then from the Petra area proceeded towards Gaza.

The detachments of Yazid and Amr were guided by Arab Christians of the area. After the dissolution of the "great phylarchy"[157] there were no organized military forces to defend the region and to hinder the invaders.[158]

Shurahbil at the head of the Yemenites[159] also took the Tebuk-Maan route.

Thus towards the close of 633 and the beginning of 634 three armies, reinforced by local Arabs, had entered Byzantine territory.

Again considerable difficulty arises concerning the movements and the first skirmishes that took place in Palestine because of existing variant traditions among the Arab chroniclers.

According to the Byzantines those Saracens who had been expelled and deprived of their yearly allowance guided their fellow Arabs into the country round "extremely wealthy" Gaza.[160]

[154] Caetani, op. cit., II, 1169.
[155] Caussin de Perceval, Essai sur l'Histoire etc., III, 428.
[156] Guillou, Prise de Gaza par les Arabes.
[157] See Volume I, p. 56.
[158] Sauvaget, Les Ghassanides et Sergiopolis.
[159] The total number of volunteers from Yemen is said to have surpassed 12,000 men. See Lammens, Étude sur le régne de Moawia.
[160] Theophanes, p. 336; Cedrenus, p. 751.

The first clash, following Baladhuri and Tabari, occurred near Gaza at the site of Dathin or Dathina,[161] 15 to 20 kilometers east of Gaza, in which battle the Muslims defeated the imperial force under the command of the patricius of Gaza. But I do not think this version of the engagement is absolutely correct. The patricius Sergius, governor of the district, when informed of the Arab invasion and the looting of the area, set out from Caesaria (Palestine) which was his seat, with a handful of troops in accordance with the Byzantine sources or with 5,000 Romans and Samaritans on the basis of the Syrian sources.[162] Sergius was confident that the cities were in no danger in view of their ample fortification, and since he was under the impression that it involved yet another razzia and nothing more, he did not suspect any risk arising from the large size of the Arab contingents, and planned to cut off their retreat. He therefore concentrated his forces, consisting for the most part of the local militia of the district, at Wadi al-Araba in the depression extending from the Dead Sea to the Aqaba gulf.[163]

Yazid learned of the concentration of Sergius's troops[164] and fell upon them, routing the enemy without difficulty. The Arabs outnumbered the Byzantine force by more than three times and they carried the day by sheer superiority of number. The remnants of the imperial force fell back to the area round Gaza where in a further engagement, most probably near Dathin, they were again routed and dissolved. According to Michael the Syrian the Arabs were better armed, and Theophanes records that Sergius was slain. Michael the Syrian, however, says that he fell from his steed and was cut down by a sword. Nicephorus, on the other hand, states that he suffered a terrible death at the hands of the Arabs.[165] It is

[161] Yaqut, ed. Wüstenfeld, II, 514.

[162] Theophanes, p. 336; Michael the Syrian, II, 413; Abul Faradj Bar Hebraeus, p. 93. I do not give much credence to the information that many Samaritans served with the army of Sergius. As a whole, the Samaritans helped the Arab extensively and because of their cooperation when Palestine was conquered, they were given the special privilege of not paying the poll tax. And I estimate that the army of Sergius did not number more than 1,000 men in view of the fact that when it was destroyed only 300 were slain.

[163] See the entry Arabia in E.I., n. ed., I, p. 576.

[164] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 168.

[165] According to Nicephorus, p. 23, Sergius was taken prisoner. The Saracens

said that the battle occurred in the month of Sebat in the year 945 (February of 634).[166]

After this second victory of the Arabs, the whole of Palestine was open to devastating raids. But the cities with their garrisons and defensive walls resisted. Not one was captured. It is incorrect to maintain that Gaza fell at this time. Theophanes explicitly states "the area round Gaza" and not the city. It appears also that the Arabs never entered the coastal areas. Perhaps they did not reach as far as Caesaria[167] in spite of a tradition existing according to which the siege of this city had begun at this time.

Amr was impressed by the defenses of the region. In the meantime, reports had been received of a concentration of strong Byzantine detachments east of the Jordan River. Amr dispatched a message to Abu Bakr informing him of the existence of powerful Byzantine forces, of the enthusiasm of the Arab fighters, and so on, and lastly, asked for more reinforcements.

Amr withdrew to southern Palestine with his detachment.[168] Yazid also concentrated his army in the same area, whereas Shurahbil covered the Balka region.

4.

When Heraclius learned of the destruction of the forces of Sergius and of the devastation of Palestine, he hastened to collect an army to meet the new threat. Heraclius was at Emesa (Homs) at the time. He was aware of the fact that the invasion was but a great razzia undertaken by the Bedouins who were supported by the disgruntled Christian Arabs of the region. But he had underestimated the forces of the invaders and could hardly believe that his powerful Empire was unduly threatened by nomads of the desert. He ordered a

then flayed a camel and sewed the unfortunate Sergius in the freshly cut hide. As the hide began to dry up, it slowly suffocated him. Sergius was accused of persuading Heraclius to cease making the annual payment to the Arabs of the border regions. Many Arab Christians of these areas had joined the detachments of Yazid and Amr, hence the hatred against Sergius and the frightening manner of his death. Goeje maintains that the death of Sergius took place after August 634.

[166] Chronicle of 724, ed. Chabot, p. 114; Liber Calipharum, ed. Land.

[167] Becker, The Expansion of the Saracens, C.M.H., II, 340.

[168] Caetani, Annali dell'Islam, II, 1137.

general mobilization of the civil guard in the area and collected an army consisting of these and some hastily inducted men who, however, had no military training or experience.[169]

The newly formed army was put under the command of his brother Theodore and was ordered to Djillik[170] to cover the defense of Damascus. The Eastern chroniclers treat the entire incident involving Theodore's advance and the engagement that took place in a fanciful and legendary manner.[171] Djillik was situated at a very strategic site. There the Byzantines pitched camp for some time with the object of determining the intentions of the Arabs. But this was not an easy task, for each leader of an Arab contingent moved freely about the country at random and without any preconceived plan, its movements determined by the amount of loot that could be taken.[172] At any rate, when the Byzantine force left, and the reason why it abandoned its positions, and why having crossed the Jordan River moved in a southwesterly direction, is unknown. They may have intended to oust the Arabs from that particular area, or perhaps they believed that Jerusalem and other cities of Palestine were threatened. And again, perhaps they wished to outflank the Arab forces and sever their line of retreat.

Abu Bakr dispatched an uninterrupted stream of reinforcements to the different commanders in the field. Muawiyah, the later Caliph, was sent at the time, and according to some sources, Abu Ubaydah, subsequent generalissimo of the forces in Syria, was also dispatched.

[169] Lammens, La Syrie, I, 53.

[170] Site known from the pre-Islamic period. Dussaud (Topographie Historique, p. 317 ff.) identifies it with Kiswé and more specifically with the peak Shohoura, a few kilometers southwest of Damascus. Lammens does not agree with this identification which, however, is generally accepted by scholars today. See E.I. n. ed., I, p. 554.

[171] Michael the Syrian, II, 418, writes that Theodorichus (Theodore), having collected his army, set off with much haughtiness. When he reached the area of Antioch (?) he met a man seated on a column. The stylite told him that he would be victorious if he promised that after his victory he would exterminate all the followers of Severus (a Monophysite). Theodorichus promised as much, but the troops that heard these remarks and were Orthodox (i.e. Monophysites) became unnerved by fear, and so on. The Chronicle of 1234, p. 190, relates very much the same story and it is repeated by Abu'l Faradj Bar Hebraeus, p. 230. All these chronicles are of Monophysitic origin and looked upon the Byzantines as heretics.

[172] Becker, The Expansion of the Saracens, C.M.H., II, 341.

But both these statements are not in my opinion correct. Baladhuri, p. 166, states that Muawiyah departed with his brother Yazid whose flag bearer he was. Ubaydah was sent to Syria by the Caliph Umar in 636. Irrespective of this, however, the initial detachments of the Arabs were continually being added to despite their losses. Abu Bakr thought it wise, besides sending further troops, to dispatch a leader who could coordinate the activities of the various commanders of the separate detachments. Following this, he ordered Khalid, who was in Iraq at the time, to hasten to Syria.[173] Both Tabari and Mirkhond maintain that Khalid was designated to take command over the entire Arab force in Syria and Palestine.

Khalid left for Syria immediately. At this point it should be pointed out that there exist conflicting statements in the chroniclers both concerning the date of his departure and the route he followed. There also exists a discrepancy concerning the number of men he had with him.

1. Dating. Baladhuri maintains that he left in the month of Rabi II of the 13th year. Rabi II of the 13th year begins on June 4, 634. A little later in the narrative, the same chronicler writes that he raided some village of the Ghassanides at Easter in the 13th year (April 24, 634). So he either did not leave in June or did not raid the village at Easter of the 13th year. Goeje corrects this to the early part of Rabi I (May 634). But even this dating does not resolve the conflict. Wellhausen and Hitti[174] argue that he left in March 634, but again this date is incorrect. Caetani[175] noted this conflict in dates and placed the departure of Khalid in January 634 and his arrival in the Damascus area in the middle of April 634.

   It is my opinion that Khalid left in the early part of June 634. I base the contention on the fact that after a march of 18 days he arrived near Harran and after he collected his forces then

[173] Baladhuri, pp. 167–169; Eutychius, p. 1093; Al-Makine, p. 19; Mirkhond, op. cit.

[174] Welhausen, Skizzen usw., p. 45; Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 149. Hitti in fact maintains that Khalid reached the outskirts of Damascus after an 18 days' march and that he had destroyed Christian forces on April 24, 834. In that event, he would have had to depart in April and not in March, otherwise the dates that Hitti accepts do not coincide.

[175] Caetani, Analli etc., II, 1220.

gave battle with the Byzantines on July 30, 634. If the views of Caetani and Hitti are accepted, then we must believe that the Byzantine forces left the vital area of Damascus unprotected for months and indeed at a time when Khalid was conducting encircling movements and attacking various villages. Moreover, the reported attack by Khalid against a small Christian village is highly improbable. Baladhuri[176] writes that some were captured and a few slain. According to him, therefore, there was a raid of no importance at a time when the imperial army began to assemble nearby and the Arab forces were at some distance from it. I would think that this raid occurred probably in 635 when the Arabs had begun the siege of Damascus and there were no longer any Byzantine forces in the area except the garrison of Damascus.

2. It is generally agreed that Khalid followed the route leading to Ayn-al-Tamr.[177] According to Baladhuri, Khalid received Abu Bakr's order at the time he was engaged in attacking Ayn-al-Tamr. He then proceeded in the direction of Palmyra (the Tadmur of the Arabs). After a brief engagement the city surrendered. Next he moved towards Huwwarin, the inhabitants of which put up a resistance, and finally to the country round Bosra where he met with the forces of Yazid and Shurahbil. The journey lasted 18 days, hence he reached the Damascus area after the middle of June 634.
3. The number of men in Khalid's detachment varies from as many as 9,000 (Sayf, Caussin de Perceval and Muir) to 500–800 (Baladhuri, Goeje, Hitti and Caetani). Wellhausen records both figures deriving from various traditions. I would contend that the latter figure is the most probable. Under no circumstances could Khalid have fed a force of 9,000 men advancing through desert country with great haste.

There arises some difficulty concerning the date of the capture of Bosra. According to the tradition it was occupied at this time and

[176] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 172.

[177] A small town of Iraq on the fringe of the desert between Anbar and Kufah. It was a fortified town with a garrison (Tabari, I, 2064). Khalid slew its garrison and sent many prisoners to Medina.

before the battle with the Byzantine army. But I doubt the authenticity of this. The imperial army was then concentrated and in a menacing position, and Bosra was well fortified. Even if we assume that it was seized through treachery following a very brief investment of the city, is it conceivable that the Arabs would have taken time out to besiege a well-fortified town without, moreover, possessing siege machines, and with the Byzantine forces near at hand? Would it not be more reasonable to maintain that its fall took place a few months later after the repeated victories of the Arabs when the morale of the imperial troops had been so badly shaken and no Byzantine army was available to come to the aid of the besieged?

The subsequent movements of either the imperial or Arab armies are unknown (See Note I). Towards the end of July the two armies faced each other in the area between Ramlah[178] and Bayt Djibrin.[179]

Many confuse this battle with the engagement of Yarmuk that took place in 636 (Caussin de Perceval and Muir). The confusion arises from the fact that in both battles the commander of the Byzantine forces was a Theodore. But in the first engagement it was the brother of Heraclius whereas in the second clash it was the sacellarius Theodore Trithurius. Goeje wrongly believes that in the first battle Sergius, the patricius of Caesaria, was in command.

There is some doubt also as to the commander of the Arabic forces in this battle. According to Yakubi and Tabari, Khalid was the generalissimo, while others including Ibn-al-Athir, Ibn Khaldoun and Eutychius etc., state that Amr was in command since the battle occurred in his district. But most likely Khalid led the Arab forces since he was after all summoned from Iraq for the purpose.

The Byzantines record that the Arabs were "vast in number"[180] and the Arabs on their part state that there were some 100,000 imperial troops.[181] Certainly both figures are highly exaggerated.

[178] City of Palestine, the modern Ramleh, southwest of Lydda. It was a capital city of Palestine, and built according to the Arab geographers and historians by Suleyman ben Abd el-Malik in the 7th Caliph of the Umayyad dynasty (Yakut, II, 817; Abul Féda, Geographie, II, 2, 18).

[179] Town of Palestine southwest of Jerusalem. In 200 A.D. the emperor Severus had given to the city, which was renamed Eleutheropolis, a great number of privileges. It was occupied by Amr.

[180] Theophanes, p. 337.

[181] Baladhuri, p. 174, estimates 100,000 men part of whom consisted of the

It is doubtful whether Heraclius could assemble such an army from the contingents existing in Syria and Palestine. In addition to the assembled army, forces were required to garrison the numerous cities and towns in the threatened area. Understandably the Arab chroniclers were wont to swell the numbers of their opponents to make their victory even more impressive.

Had all the Arab detachments been assembled in one place, a rather unlikely event, their numbers would have totalled some 24 to 27,000 men. Caetani[182] concludes that the Byzantine force amounted to 9,000 and the Arabs 24,000 troops. I rather think that the figure for the Arabs is an overestimate. The Byzantines most probably numbered 9 to 10,000 whereas the Arabs had assembled 15–18,000 men.

There is also great difference of opinion concerning the date of the battle. Baladhuri records that it was given on a Monday, twelve days before the end of the month Jumadhah I, in the 13th year of the Hegira (21 July 634). But this date does not fall on a Monday. Hence Suyuti writes only Jumadhah I of the same year. Most Arab chroniclers, among them Tabari, accept the date of the 28th of Jumadhah I, a Saturday. Consequently, the majority of contemporary historians[183] tend to accept July 30, 634 as the day, and this falls on a Saturday.

The battle took place at the site of Adjnadayn. Many historians could not place the exact position from extant geographical sources. The Russian scholar Miednikoff argued that the site should be identified with Djannabatayn, between the villages of Al-Gannabah, Al-Gharbiyyah and Sharkiyya.[184] This view was supported by many historians.[185] Latterly, Goitein[186] maintained that the name should

army permanently stationed in the area. The Anonymous Chronicle of Guidi records that over 100,000 Greeks were slain! And according to Ibn Ishak 70,000 of these had been sent by Heraclius.

[182] Caetani, Annali dell'Islam, III, pp. 39–40.

[183] Caetani, op. cit., III, p. 23 ff; Goeje, Memoire etc., p. 51; Becker, op. cit., II, 341; Bury, A History etc.; Duchêsne, Histoire de l'Eglise, p. 419; Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 150; Lammens, La Syrie, I, 55; Wellhausen, op. cit.; Dennett, Conversion, etc.

[184] Gibb, E. I. n. ed., I, p. 215.

[185] Becker, op. cit., II, 341; Caetani, III, 31; Abel, Histoire de la Palestine, p. 396.

[186] Shelomo Dov Goitein, The Historical Background etc.

not have been altered because Al-Adjnadayn is encountered in many Arabic sources.

Greek sources state that the battle took place at Gabitha[187] (probably a corruption of Gharbiyyah) whither the Arabs had retreated.[188] Sébéos places the engagement at Rabbath Moab east of the Dead Sea, at a point near which the first skirmishes took place between the Arabs and imperial troops.[189]

The battle was bitterly fought, and the Byzantine army was finally overcome. But it was not destroyed as many maintain because after a brief interim, the same army was regrouped and was active in other engagements.

News of the great victory at Adjnadayn reached Medina a little before the death of Abu Bakr.[190]

5.

After suffering this unexpected reverse, the Byzantine army withdrew and tried to regroup its forces at a point further north. According to Byzantine sources, after his defeat Theodore left for Edessa to meet with Heraclius. But this information appears to be incorrect. Edessa should read Emesa. If in fact such a meeting took place, the rage of Heraclius against his brother who had abandoned his army soon after the defeat was very justified. But more about this incident in another chapter.

The Arabs then proceeded to ravage the entire area. It is reported

[187] Theophanes, p. 337; Cedrenus, p. 745; Isidorianae Continuationes.

[188] Nöldeke, in the Zur Geschichte der Araber usw., supports the thesis that the battle of Gabitha referred to by Theophanes is not the same as the battle of Yarmuk. His argument, however, had not been accepted. See Brehier, in Histoire de l'Eglise, of Fliche and Martin, V, 128. But Michael the Syrian, II, 420, states that the battle occurred in the hinterland round the city of Bosra which was known as "Gabitha" on the Yarmuk River. Honigmann (Al-Yarmuk) also identifies the battle of Yarmuk with Gabitha, and argues that it took place in 636. See the following Chapter.

[189] According to Yakut, ed. Wüstenfeld, IV, 377, Moab is located on the edge of Syria in the Balka region. Tradition says that it was occupied by Ubaydah after the fall of Bosra. According to Abul Féda the ancient city of Moab was destroyed and replaced by the small town of Rabbah. It lay in the region of Mount Sina (II, 2, 24/25).

[190] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 175; Suyuti, p. 77.

that 40,000 Christians, Jews, Samaritans and others were slain.[191] All speak of the frightful pillage that southern Palestine underwent. The Arabs now ceased to be disciplined soldiers and became of a sudden robbers.[192] Many villages and small unfortified towns surrendered and paid poll taxes. But it appears that no major cities were occupied at the time. Goeje and Caetani maintain that various cities were taken by Amr and Shurahbil, but I do not believe this to be the case. Most cities were conquered after the battle of Yarmuk when all resistance had collapsed.

The Byzantines began to reassemble their army behind the marshes of Baysan.[193] It had been reinforced by troops from the garrisons of Decapolis (Eastern Jordan). This constituted a major threat against the rear of the Arab detachments.

Shurahbil launched an attack against the enemy army and forced it across the Jordan River.

The entire countryside now lay at the mercy of the Arabs. Rightly does Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, describe the situation with horror and dismay. The inhabitants of Jerusalem could no longer make a pilgrimage to Bethlehem[194] on the Christmas of 634.

The imperial forces finally succeeded in assembling their army in the Fihl area.[195] The Byzantines destroyed the dams of the Jordan to flood the region round Baysan, thus hoping to delay or to halt the Arab advance.

Khalid's detachment[196] succeeded in forcing its way across the

[191] Chronicle of the year 724, p. 114; Liber Calipharum, ed. Land. The chronicle speaks of the death of 4,000 men. This perhaps corresponds more to the facts.

[192] Caetani, Annali dell'Islam, III, 189.

[193] The Scythopolis of the Empire, modern Beit Shean. A small town 30 kilometers south of the lake of Tiberias, on the west bank of the Jordan.

[194] Migne, P. G., 87ter, p. 3201 ff.

[195] Fihl or Fahl. Ancient city of Jordan, 12 kilometers southwest of Baysan and on the eastern bank of the Jordan. Many Macedonian colonists were settled here in 300 B.C. and it was renamed Pella. Only ruins mark the site today.

[196] There appears to be some doubt as to who was in command during the battle. Baladhuri says Ubaydah. But the latter reached Syria in 636. Mirkhond also supports this view. Disagreement also exists on the date. But the dating of Baladhuri is generally accepted. Goeje states that the commander was Shurahbil, as does Caetani, Annali III, p. 211, whereas in the Chrono-

Jordan and defeated the imperial troops that scattered and fled to the various cities for safety. The battle took place on January 23, 635.[197] Baladhuri[198] maintains that 100,000 Greeks were slain in this engagement, but this is highly exaggerated. The battle was in any case bitterly contested, and the defeat had both military repercussions and an adverse affect on the morale of the imperial forces. The road to Damascus now lay open and the Arabs appeared to be invincible. Moreover, they at last began to abandon the idea of razzia and to dream of outright conquest.

Following the battle, Shurahbil accepted the surrender of the city of Fihl. Khalid at the head of his army moved up the valley of the Jordan. Detachments of his troops overran the Balka and Harran regions. Then Bosra fell despite a spirited defense by its inhabitants.[199] It is recorded that Romanos, governor of the city, became a Muslim after its surrender.[200] Theophanes[201] states that Bosra was occupied during the Caliphate of Umar. This is verified by other Eastern chroniclers.[202]

Once having crossed the Hieromyax River (the Yarmuk), Khalid pressed on to Damascus. Khalid-ibn-Sayd (not to be confused with Khalid ibn-Walid, the "sword of God") who after his replacement as leader of a detachment is said to have served as a volunteer in the army of Shurahbil, led a strong vanguard to Mardj al-Suffar, a plain some 30 kilometers south of Damascus. There he encountered a powerful Byzantine detachment led by the general Vaanes.

graphia Islamica, I, p. 150, he writes that Khalid was generalissimo. Becker, Brockelmann and Hitti agree that Khalid was in command, and this makes sense since he had been sent to take supreme command.

[197] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 176; Goeje, op. cit., p. 74; Caetani, Chronographia Islamica, I, p. 150; Becker in C.M.H., II, 342; Hitti, op. cit., p. 150.

[198] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 177.

[199] The Arabs relate the capture of Bosra in very legendary fashion. After a siege lasting a few days, the governor of the city Romanos informed the Arabs that there existed a secret underground entrance beneath the walls of the city. 100 Arabs entered the passage and faced with the threat of a grand assault, the city quickly surrendered. See also Sedillot, Histoire etc., I, 136.

[200] Gibbon, ed. Bury, V. 418–419.

[201] p. 336.

[202] Michael the Syrian, II, 417; Bar Hebraeus, p. 93; Agapius, ed. Vasiliev, p. 209.

The information we have on the battle that followed is exceptionally confusing (See note II). After this battle no further obstacles barred the road to Damascus.

6.

Khalid appeared suddenly before Damascus at the head of the Arab army on March 13, 635.[203] He encamped opposite the Gate of the East (Al-Bab Ash Sharki).[204] Gradually the various detachments also arrived and pitched camp before the different gates of the city. According to the traditional story,[205] Abu Ubayda encamped opposite the Al-Gabiyah Gate, Amr the Gate of the Apostle Thomas, Shurahbil before the Faranti Gate and Yazid sat opposite the stretch of wall from the Small Gate to the Gate of Kayzan. I again emphasize that Ubayda did not go to Syria before 636.[206]

But they had no intentions of besieging Damascus, since the Arabs were wholly ignorant of the techniques of siege warfare and possessed no siege machines. Because of this, they invested the city closely to bar any possible reinforcements that would be sent thither, and to halt any supply caravans that tried to enter.

The Byzantine governor of Damascus remains unknown. The Arab versions (Sayf, etc.) state that the governor was one patricius Nestas (Anastasius?) According to Ibn-Isak, he was the general Vahan.[207] Baladhuri speaks of the Bishop as governor, whereas

[203] Baladhuri explicitly says that the Arabs arrived before Damascus 14 days before the end of the month of Moharrem, the 14th year of the Hegira. This month in 635 ended on the 26th of March, hence the 14th day before it ended falls on March 13. I do not know why Caetani writes the 11th of March in the Annali (p. 411) and March 12 in the Chronographia (p. 170).

[204] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 186.

[205] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 186; Chronicle of year 1234, pp. 192–194; Eutychius, p. 1097.

[206] Ubayda is erroneously reported as having participated in the expeditions of 634 and 635. He had been sent to Syria by Umar to replace Khalid, and most probably came to Syria with the last reinforcements sent before the battle of Yarmuk. He commanded the Arab forces during the second siege of Damascus (636) and perhaps this has caused the confusion. The incident of the Al-Gabiyah Gate and so on, undoubtedly concerns the second siege during which Ubayda entered triumphantly into Damascus as generalissimo of the Arab army (Caetani, Annali, III, 355).

[207] Goeje, Mémoire sur la conquête de la Syrie, p. 83; Caetani, Annali, III, 340.

Eutychius names Mansour, son of Serdjoun (Sergius) as such. Caetani maintains that the probable head of the garrison was Vahan. But this conflicts with the information given by Theophanes that Vaanes (Vahan) attempted to reinforce the garrison of Damascus and that he expelled the Arabs from Emesa (Homs).[208]

The Arabs noted that the only possible route through which beleaguered Damascus could be reinforced was the road leading to Emesa. Hence they constructed a fortress at Berze (northwest of Damascus) and established a vanguard at Thaniyyah-al-Uqab, a site dominating the route to Emesa.[209]

Heraclius who was then at Antioch ordered reinforcements dispatched to the Damascus garrison. A detachment of Byzantine cavalry attempted an entry but was defeated by the Arabs[210] at the site of Bayt Lihya.

In hot pursuit of the Byzantine detachment, the Arabs proceeded as far as Emesa. The city put up a defence, whereas Heraclius commanded Vaanes to free the besieged city with whatever forces he had available. Vaanes reached the outskirts of Emesa, joined forces with the garrison, and routed the Arabs in a battle that took place on May 26, 635. The Arabs who suffered great losses were forced to withdraw quickly towards Damascus. Following this victory, Vaanes advanced on the road to Damascus and according to Theophanes pitched camp at the Bardanesius River,[211] near Damascus (See Note III). But he could not firmly establish his position nor send reinforcements to Damascus.

He was confronted by a large concentration of Arabs which in any event far outnumbered his own forces, so he decided to withdraw towards Emesa and join up with the reinforcements that were centred much further north. On the basis of a Syrian source,[212] the retreat of Vaanes took place on the 19th of Jumadha II (August 10, 635).

The residents of Damascus made repeated appeals for help from

[208] Theophanes, p. 337.

[209] Goeje, op cit.., p. 90; Caetani, Annali etc., III, 414.

[210] Dussaud, Topographie etc., p. 318.

[211] Bardanesius, or the Barade River. It has its source in the anti-Lebanon range and flows through Damascus.

[212] In Assemani, III, 2.6. XCVI; Geoje, Mémoire etc., pp. 84–85; Caetani, Annali, III, 416 ff.

Heraclius. The Emperor asked that they maintain their defense until he arrived with an army for its succour.[213] Within Damascus itself there was must dissension and division of opinion. Many of the inhabitants had wanted to give up the city. But the garrison insisted on continuing the defense. Gradually negotiations were conducted with the Arabs for the terms of surrender. It appears that these negotiations were undertaken by the bishop and by Mansour, son of the tax commissioner. The Chronicle of 1234 relates that when the inhabitants saw no help arriving, they asked for the conditions of surrender from Khalid and the Chronicle adds, "John, son of Sergoun, was the intermediator because he was liked by and known to the Arabs." According to Nau,[214] John and Mansour were the sons of Sergoun who was the commissioner for taxes in the area. After the withdrawal of the Byzantine force under Vaanes, when all hope of succour vanished, the articles of surrender were drawn up and signed by Khalid. The garrison was allowed to withdraw and the city surrendered with the stipulation that Damascus would pay an annual tribute in taxes of 100,000 dinars.

The siege, or rather the blockade, since no attack was made against the walls of the city, lasted under six months. The besiegers entered Damascus in the first ten days of September 635 (See Note IV). By virtue of the articles of surrender the inhabitants were guaranteed complete safety of life and property provided they paid the agreed tax. They were allowed freedom of worship, protection of churches and their possessions. No house was to be demolished, and the proprietor would not be deprived of his estate. As long as the residents paid their poll tax they would retain their goods.

Arab chroniclers have understandably created various legends and myths concerning the surrender of Damascus (See Note V).

At the moment the Arabs entered the city through the Gate of

[213] Mirkhond, op. cit., p. 56.

[214] L'Araméen Chrétien, etc. He writes that Sergoun (Sergius) was in charge of the finances of Syria under Heraclius. He was compelled to pay Heraclius the taxes which he had paid to the Persians when the latter had occupied Syria. See Volume I of the present work, p. 261. Sergoun had two sons, Mansour, who was in charge of financial affairs under Muawiyah I (661–679), and John, who negotiated the surrender of Damascus. The negotiations were conducted with the Christian Arabs serving in Khalid's army. Eutychius (pp. 1096 ff) maintains that Mansour was responsible for the surrender, and this version is accepted by Becker, Caetani and Hitti.

the East, the garrison marched out and made for the north. Khalid soon followed in hot pursuit.[215] Yazid was left in command of Damascus.

It is reported[216] that Khalid routed a body of imperial troops near Heliopolis (Baalbek). At all events, Heliopolis was surrendered to the Arabs by the conventional treaty of capitulation. Khalid then advanced on Emesa (Homs) where the garrison resisted. In the meantime, Heraclius had ordered the concentration of all available Byzantine forces to the north where new detachments were being regrouped. The inhabitants of Emesa finally asked for the terms of surrender. The agreement was made in the month of Djulqade in the 14th year (from 17th December 635 to 16th January 636)[217]. The city was delivered up when the residents agreed to pay an annual tax of 70,000 dinars (Yakut).

The tradition relates that after the fall of Emesa, Epiphania (Hama), Larissa (Shaizar) and other cities of Syria also surrendered. But Ishak relates that the Arabs wintered in Damascus, so both Goeje and Caetani correctly maintain that after Emesa no other city was taken.[218]

Thus did the first phase of the Arab incursions close. During the entire period and until the battle of Fihl, the Arabs appeared on the scene as marauders with sole object the taking of plunder. But after their remarkable successes, the situation changed radically. Now began the period of conquest.

[215] Baladhuri, op. cit., pp. 200–201, records both traditions, one that Khalid pursued the Byzantine army and the other, that Ubaydah went in their pursuit with the aid of Khalid. Yakubi, pp. 170–172, maintains that Ubaydah was in command. Tabari, III, 407, writes likewise, but Mirkhond on the contrary writes that Ubaydah and Khalid were together.

[216] Mirkhond, op. cit., pp. 63–66.

[217] Élie bar Sinaya, p. 82; Nöldeke, Zur Geschichte der Araber usw.; Chronicle of 1234, p. 194; Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 201; Tabari, op. cit., III, 408.

[218] Goeje, op. cit., pp. 102–103; Caetani, Annali, III, 502.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONQUEST OF SYRIA, PALESTINE AND MESOPOTAMIA

Heraclius, who had proceeded to Antioch after the Arab advance to Damascus, feverishly prepared a new army. It appears that the imperial authorities had not grasped completely the significance of the terrible threat that had arisen against the southeastern provinces of the Empire in the shape of the Arab advance. At all events, during this very critical period for Byzantium, Heraclius sadly lacked the means for ample defence, but above all he lacked the energy and drive, the faith and the stamina that so distinguished him in his wars against the Persians. Moreover, he was over 60, an age that was very advanced for the time. He had spent the best years of his life fighting his way through Asia Minor, the Caucasus, Persia and Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. He had fought long and hard and had been wounded many times.

The picture in Arabia was now very different. A tremendous change had come about among the denizens of that peninsula. Their kinsmen had for two years now fought victorious battles, carrying all before them and overcoming any obstacles that stood in their way. The amount of booty taken was hitherto undreamt of. Reports of the ease of rich plunder had swept to the remotest parts of Arabia. Rumours of the wealth of the new regions, of easily cultivated lands, of the existence of rich pasturelands, naturally excited the imagination of the Arab who always had a tendency for the supernatural or the mythical.

The first Arabs who had enlisted in the detachments organized by Abu Bakr left with the idea of returning to their homes laden with booty. But now even those who had remained behind to confront the harsh realities of the Arabian peninsula, the ever present poverty and hunger, soon were excited by the new horizons opening to them. Entire tribes were prepared to emigrate to the rich lands further north. Dreams of wealth and prosperity soon took hold of

them. Those who had departed for the new territories had no intention of ever returning. The era of the razzia had ended. The idea of conquest began to take firm root among the hungry Arab peoples.

As Tabari so succinctly put it, the time that the Arabs were known as wolves who stole when the master was absent was gone.

I.

Heraclius made a tremendous effort to collect a new army. The new force, of necessity, was composed of the local militia of the region and of mercenaries and volunteers who were quickly inducted and given the rudiments of military training. It is conceivable that he tried to persuade the Arab Christians of Mesopotamia to make a diversionary move in the rear of the Arabs. There were, in any event, among those called upon to serve, many Arabs of the tribes of Ghassan, Djuntam, Kalb, Salih and so on. The light cavalry was put under the command of the tribal leader of the Ghassanides, Djabalah ben-al-Hayyam. A corps of Armenians originating probably from the Armeniac Theme[219] was placed under the command of Vaanes. The whole force was led by the Sacellarius Theodore, the royal treasurer, known as Trithurius.[220] The sources here are rather conflicting. Theophanes mentions Vaanes and Theodore, whilst Cedrenus cites only Theodore.[221] The various Eastern chroniclers mention as commanders Vahan (Vaanes), the son of Sahrbaraz[222] and the Sacellarius (See Note VI).

There is great disagreement as to the size of the Byzantine army that was assembled. The Byzantine writers say very little about the period. One extant reference exists and it mentions a figure of

[219] Jenkins, Byzantium, The Imperial Centuries, p. 39.

[220] Nicephorus, Historia Brevis, p. 23.

[221] Theophanes, p. 337; Cedrenus, p. 745. The identical names of the commanders of the Byzantine forces in the two battles of Adjnadayn and Yarmuk, have confused several contemporary historians. Thus Hitti, in both his excellent studies, mentions as commander of the imperial forces in both engagements, Theodore, brother of Heraclius.

[222] Sahrbaraz was the great general of Chosroes II and the chief foe of Heraclius throughout the entire war with Persia. In 630 he seized the throne of Persia but was murdered after reigning for only 40 days. See Volume I pp. 310–311. It is reported (Abul Faradj, p. 94) that when he was murdered his son fled to Heraclius. Nicephorus states (p. 21) that Heraclius had granted the son the title of patricius.

40,000.[223] The Syrian sources on the other hand say 70,000 men.[224]

The Arab chroniclers on this point are truly startling. Baladhuri (p. 207) raises the figure of the Byzantine army to 200,000, Tabari begins with 50,000 and concludes with 250,000. Mirkhond (p. 67) swells the figure to 500,000 whilst Maqdisi is satisfied with 400,000. Khuwarazmi (Baethgen, Fragmente usw., p. 111) estimates it at 200,000. Ibn-Ishak, more logically, limits the figure to 100,000 of whom 12,000 were Christian Arabs and an equal number Armenians.

Caetani[225] records that the Greeks numbered 40-50,000 men. Other scholars give other figures.[226] Even Caetani's estimate appears exaggerated. It would have been difficult for Heraclius to assemble such a large force in Syria. Hence, I rather agree with Lammens who believes that the Byzantine army did not number more than 30,000. It was subsequently reinforced, and it is for this reason that in the engagement of Yarmuk, Theophanes (p. 338) raises the total of the army including the Armenians under Vaanes and the Christian Arabs under Djabalah to 40,000 men.

In the spring of 636, Theodore Trithurius, the Sacellarius of the Emperor, set out with an army of 30,000 men to expel the Arabs from the imperial territories. As generals under his command he had the Armenian Vaanes, the Persian Nicetas, son of Sahrbaraz, and Djabalah, tribal chieftain of the Ghassanides.

The army made a sudden advance against Emesa.[227] Vaanes was the first to move off and after rapid movements entered Emesa which the Arabs had abandoned. It is reported that he punished

[223] Theophanes, pp. 337–338; Cedrenus, p. 745.

[224] Michael the Syrian, II, p. 421; the Armenian edition of Langlois, p. 230; Abul Faradj, p. 94. Élie bar Sinaya (p. 82) writes that the Greeks numbered 200,000.

[225] Caetani, Annali dell'Islam, III, 505.

[226] Pernice, p. 279, writes that the Byzantine army amounted to 100,000 men. Goeje (pp. 106–107) believes that the imperial force numbered 40,000 and outnumbered the Arabs. Lebeau, relying on Pseudo-Wakidi, gives highly imaginative figures. Becker (in C.M.H., II, 343), Hitti (History of the Arabs, p. 152, and History of Syria, p. 415) estimate the Byzantine army at 50,000. Huart (I, 234) believes it numbered 80,000. Lastly, Lammens (La Syrie, I, 56) says 30,000. The latter figure is accepted by Amantos, History etc., I, 316 and Marçais, Le Monde Oriental, p. 192.

[227] Becker, in C.M.H., II, 343.

those residents of the city who had negotiated the capitulation to the Arabs.[228]

After the arrival of the Sacellarius,[229] the Byzantine army advanced on Damascus which the Arabs had also abandoned without a struggle. There is at this point an imaginary story founded on Eutychius and Pseudo-Wakidi. It relates that Heraclius had ordered his eparch Mansour to give money to Vahan in order to pay the salaries of the troops. But Mansour kept putting the payment off with the result that there was much discontent in the Byzantine ranks.[230]

The Arab forces were scattered throughout Syria and Palestine. It would appear that they were surprised by the rapid advance of Vaanes and the arrival of Theodore soon after. Khalid, who had assumed supreme command, ordered the immediate abandonment of the conquests. At Emesa the Arabs returned the taxes which they had collected from the inhabitants on the grounds that they could not retain them since they were not in a position to protect the city and hence fulfil their part of the capitulation agreement. The inhabitants insisted that they preferred the bondage of the Arabs to the pressures and the tyranny they endured under the imperial administrators. They thereupon shut the gates in the walls to prevent the entry of the Byzantine army. The same course was taken by the citizens of other cities.[231] The Arabs applied an indentical policy with Damascus.[232] There is undoubtedly considerable exaggeration and imagination on the part of the Arab writers, but the fact is that traditionally the Arabs adhered to the terms of capitulation with the inevitable result that the inhabitants were much pleased by their conduct. This would indicate that there was considerable collaboration between the inhabitants and the Arabs, and widespread support for the Arabs by the populations residing in the territories occupied by them.

Khalid retired his forces in good order. Then he summoned all the

[228] Mirkhond, op cit., p. 71.
[229] Theophanes, p. 337.
[230] Eutychius, p. 1101; Lebeau, Histoire du Bas-Empire, XI, 209.
[231] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 211; Abul Faradj Bar Hebraeus, Chronicon Ecclesiasticum, ed. Lamy, I, 274.
[232] Chronicle of the Year 1234, p. 195.

scattered detachments to make haste and unite with his own. He also informed the Caliph Umar of the danger that threatened their armies and asked for reinforcements. Confronted with a numerically superior enemy, the strategy of Khalid was to use delaying tactics to gain time in order to assemble all the Arab forces available and to receive additional reinforcements. But he also wished to be nearer the desert country wherein he would have tremendous advantages. The Byzantine army had no camels and was burdened more by heavy weaponry less suitable for battle in the areas bordering on desert country. In the event of an unfavorable turn of the battle operations, it would be easier for him to save his forces through the desert in which the Arabs felt at home.

The Arabs pitched camp south of Yarmuk,[233] at Adzriat, thus having the deep ravines of the Hieromyax (Yarmuk) and its southern tributaries between them and the Byzantine army.[234]

After a few skirmishes, the imperial army continued to advance, but at a slower pace, and initially halted in the Djillik (Kiswé) area, a strongly fortified position guarding the route to Damascus.[235] It is reported that subsequently they took up positions at Dera[236] between the lake of Tiberias and the Harran range. The site is certainly very strategic and easily defendable, and overlooks the crossings leading to Syria and northern Palestine. But a closer scrutiny of the map does not convince me of either the first or the second location. The first position of Djillik is far from the site of the battlefield. The second lies south of Yarmuk and as such it does not agree with what the chroniclers record, that is, that the Arabs were south and the Byzantines north of the Yarmuk.[237] The latter site certainly explains how the imperial troops were trapped in the narrow ravines of the Yarmuk.

[233] Caetani, Chronographia Islamica, I, 179.

[234] The Al-Yarmuk river is the Sheriat el-Menadire of modern times. It rises in the Harran mountain range and flows in a westerly direction. It cuts through the valley Wadi al-Ramad and enters the Jordan (Nahr al-Urdunn) south of the lake of Tiberias. Pliny calls it the Hieromyax (Honigman, in E. I. old ed., IV).

[235] Caetani, Chronographia, I, 180; Becker in C.M.H., II, 343.

[236] Jenkins, op. cit., p. 35; Glubb, the Great etc., p. 176.

[237] Caetani, Annali, III, 507; Pernice, l'Imperatore Eraclio ,p. 279.

2.

Another problem arousing much controversy is the number of the Arab forces participating in the battle of Yarmuk.

According to tradition, the three emirs (generals) who had set out for the great razzia initially had 3,000 men each.[238] This number was increased to 7,500 for each detachment and finally the grand total amounted to 24,000 men. Tabari[239] states that the number of the Arab force at Yarmuk came to 36,000. Maqdisi says 35,000[240] whereas Sayf raises the figure to 46,000.

The Byzantine chroniclers write, "in that year, countless Saracens, abandoning Arabia, marched into the regions round Damascus."[241] Al-Makine[242] estimates the number of Arabs at 36,000 not including the Arab inhabitants of Palestine and Syria who had enlisted in the various detachments or who had assisted their compatriots in many ways.

It is certain that from time to time both Abu Bakr and Umar would send reinforcements to the different detachments. And it is certain that many Arabs fell in battle in the various skirmishes with the Byzantines. The estimate of the actual number of Arabs therefore becomes more difficult. Becker, Caetani and Hitti accept Baladhuri's figure of 24-25,000. Lammens also agrees with this estimate.[243]. At all events, Umar had dispatched further bodies of troops to reinforce Khalid.

Mirkhond[244] states that initially Umar sent Aamer ben Hudhyn with 3,000 men and later dispatched Sowyd ben Isamet Aussari with an additional 3,000. According to another version, again based on Mirkhond, both Sad ben Aamer and Abu Sufyan were sent each at the head of 1,000 men. Caetani[245] maintains that Umar sent 8,000 men as reinforcements. Most probably, Abu Ubayda ben al-Djarrah then arrived with one of the detachments sent to strengthen

[238] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 167.
[239] Tabari, op. cit., III, 349.
[240] Al-Maqdisi, p. 193.
[241] Theophanes, p. 337; Cedrenus, p. 745; George the Monk, p. 707.
[242] Al-Makine, op. cit., p. 23.
[243] Becker, in C.M.H., II, 343; Caetani, Annali, III, p. 505; Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 152; Lammens, La Syrie, I, 56.
[244] Mirkhond, ed. Huart, pp. 71–75.
[245] Caetani, Annali, III, 575.

Khalid's army. It also appears that 1,000 Companions of the Prophet took part in the battle.

Khalid withdrew his concentrated forces initially to the Djabiya area where he attempted to hinder the advancing imperial army. But Vaanes, whose army greatly outnumbered that of Khalid, attacked and forced him to retreat.[246]

Sébéos[247] records that Heraclius had ordered that engagements be avoided with the Arabs, and the imperial army nurture its forces, maintaining a defensive attitude until further reinforcements were sent. But I do not believe this to be the case. The information recurs at different dates, and it would seem therefore that some traditional source must exist specifying as much.

Nöldeke[248] maintains that the battle of "Gabitha" referred to by Theophanes is identical with the engagement at Yarmuk, and that Gabitha was a known village in the area of the Ghassanides. But in view of the fact that Theophanes relates that this battle took place in another year and the commander of the imperial army was Theodore, the brother of Heraclius, irrespective of the similarity of names, the battle of "Gabitha" cannot possibly be identified with the clash at Hiermuhtha (See Note VII). I referred to this in Chapter III.

It is unusually difficult, if not impossible, to describe the details of the battle at Yarmuk. The sources are confusing and often-times ingenuously naive.

Mirkhond[249] relates that a meeting took place between Mahan (Vaanes) and Khalid. The former demanded that the Arabs withdraw and not invade Syria again for which payment of 10,000 gold coins would be made to Umar, 5,000 to Ubayda, 5,000 to Khalid, and 100,000 would be distributed among the detachments. But Khalid replied that the imperial troops should either embrace Islam or pay a poll tax.

It appears that the Arabs tried to induce the Ghassanid Djabalah and other Arab Christians in the Byzantine army to abandon the

[246] Marçais, Le Monde Oriental, p. 192; Caetani, Chronographia Islamica, I, 179.

[247] Sébéos, ed. Madler, pp. 96–97; Nicephorus, p. 23; Bréhier, La nouvelle crise etc., p. 129.

[248] Nöldeke, Zur Geschichte der Araber usw.

[249] Mirkhond, op. cit., pp. 71–75.

force. They also tempted the Armenians to leave the imperial ranks.[250]

The armies faced each other for some time, each in turn attempting to draw the other by different ruses away from the strong defensive positions they had taken up. Theophanes[251] relates that a clash took place on the 23rd of the month of "Löos,"[252] corresponding to the 16th July 636. In this engagement, the troops of the Sacellarius were routed. I presume that a detachment of the imperial army under the Sacellarius Theodore fell into a trap of the Arabs and he gave battle without waiting for the concentration of the army.

It appears also that there was much division of opinion in the imperial forces which handicapped the coordination and fulfilment of its objective, resulting in the several generals undertaking individual military operations to the disadvantage of the whole. Mutual jealousies among the commanders and indiscipline were daily occurrences.[253]

The battle given by the Sacellarius Theodore may be due to an encircling movement of the Arabs. The latter attempted to cut the link with Damascus in order that the Byzantines could not hold the naturally defensible line Dera-Djillik.[254] Theophanes relates that after this defeat the Armenians rebelled and proclaimed Vaanes as their king.[255]

The detachment of the Sacellarius was forced to retreat. Following this, the Arabs launched an attack on the Vaanes detachment which found itself in a difficult position. The imperial troops withdrew to Wadi-Ruqqad (the right tributary of the Yarmuk) and attempted to reopen communications with Damascus. Confronted with a delicate and dangerous situation, the Byzantine troops closed ranks and fought bravely and with great determination. For three days they managed to hold the Arab attacks and to push them back. Unfortunately for the Byzantine army, however, on the evening of August

[250] Caussin de Perceval, op. cit., III, 440; Lebeau, op. cit., XI, 236.

[251] Theophanes, p. 338.

[252]. Löos, the 10th Macedonian month beginning on June 24. See Grumel, La Chronologie, p. 169.

[253] Caetani, Chronographia, p. 180; Becker, C.M.H., II, 343; Bréhier, La Nouvelle crise etc., p. 129; Nomicos, Introduction etc., p. 123; Glubb, op. cit., p. 178.

[254] Caetani, Annali, III, 606.

[255] Theophanes, p. 338; Cedrenus, p. 745.

19, 636, a hot southern wind began to blow. The wind carried with it clouds of dust from the desert stretches blinding the battling imperial troops. The cavalry was then compelled to withdraw to the north and when the Christian Arabs saw the battle turning in the enemy's favour, they began to abandon the Byzantine army.[256] This brought about the total collapse of the imperial resistance. To save themselves many retreated into the deep ravines of the Yarmuk where they perished. Others could not offer resistance because they had retreated into the sandy wastes wherein they sank to their knees under the weight of their heavy armament.[257] The figures for the casualties of both the Byzantine and Arab forces are incredible,[258] and certain sources are as mythical in describing the details on how the battle was fought.[259]

The final phase of the battle in which the imperial army was destroyed took place on August 20, 636.[260] Both armies fought

[256] Goeje, Mémoire etc., p. 121; Caetani, Annali, III, 606–608; Becker, C.M.H., II, 343; Marçais, op. cit., p. 192; Amantos, op. cit., I, 316; Pernice, op. cit., p. 281; Bréhier, op. cit., p. 129; Nomicos, op. cit., p. 123; Cheira, La lutte des Arabes, etc., p. 45; Lammens, op. cit., I, 56.

[257] Sébéos, ed. Macler, p. 97; Ghevond, ed. Chahnazarian, p. 3.

[258] Baladhuri (p. 207) states 70.000 Greeks were slain. Mirkhond (p. 79) and Maqdisi (p. 193) give the same figure. Tabari (III, 352) writes that 120,000 Greeks were killed and 3,000 Arabs. Michael the Syrian (II, 421) claims 40,000. The Anonymous Chronicle of Guidi (ed. Guidi and ed. Nöldeke) says that the Arabs slew 100,000 Greeks together with their generalissimo. The chronicle edited by Nöldeke (Zur Geschichte der Araber) gives a figure of 50,000 Romans. Abul-Faradj cites 40,000, whereas Elie Bar Sinaya says 50,000. And finally, the Chronicle of 1234 records 40,000 slain. According to the Pseudo-Wakidi (Lebeau, XI, 242) 100,000 Roman troops were slain and 5,000 Arabs.

[259] Mirkhond relates that Mahan (Vaanes) drew up 20 divisions of cavalry each containing 20,000 men. Mahan wore a golden breastplate and crown on his head and led the force. Tabari states that the Arabs were drawn up in battle positions with Amr on the right wing and Yazid on the left. Sébéos narrates that the Arabs had set part of the army to lay a trap for the Greeks. They linked with rope the feet of the camels which they placed round their camp. The exhausted Greeks could not penetrate the encampment of the Arabs. Baladhuri records that the Greeks had bound themselves with chains, one to the other, so that no one could flee.

[260] Baladhuri says the month of Rejeb, the 15th year. Rejeb commences on the 8th of August 636. A Syrian source (Nöldeke, Zur Geschichte der Araber usw.) states that the battle took place on the 20th of Ab 947, that is, August 20, 636. Elie Bar Sinaya (p. 82) gives the same date. This date has

bitterly and bravely. The wives of the Arabs[261] also were active in the engagement. They had removed the pegs of the tents and with these forced those who wished to withdraw back into the carnage. It was a fight to the finish.[262] Some 40,000 Byzantines and 35,000 Arabs took part. According to Nicephorus (p. 24) many imperial troops and officers perished. Sébéos records that 2,000 officers were slain. All the sources describe the defeat and the massacre of the Byzantine army. The Sacellarius Theodore fought heroically and fell in the heated struggle. Vaanes also fought bravely, and one source states that he was killed,[263] whereas another version records that, afraid to face the wrath of Heraclius, he sought refuge in a monastery of Mt. Sinai where he took the vows and became a monk under the name Anastasius.[264]

The Ghassanid Djabalah survived the battle and embraced Islam.[265] Nicetas, son of Sahrbaraz,[266] also survived. A lengthy romantisized story has been constructed round the latter.

been accepted by all scholars. Caetani, Annali, III, 608; Goeje, op. cit., p. 121; Marçais, op. cit., p. 192; Bréhier, Vie et Mort etc., p. 56; Becker in C.M.H., II, 344; Lambros, History etc., V, 714–715; Hitti, op. cit., p. 152; Lammens, op. cit., I, 56; Huart, op. cit., I, 235; Honigmann, in E.I. old ed., V, p. 1223.

[261] Many Arab women accompanied their men in the latter campaigns.

[262] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 207.

[263] Michael the Syrian, II, 421; Anonymous Chronicle Guidi; Anonymous Chronicle of the year 1234; Mirkhond, op. cit., p. 79.

[264] Eutychius, p. 1101; Goeje, op. cit., p. 122.

[265] Djabalah was the last leader of the Ghassanid tribe. He soon embraced Islam, but he could not bear the severity of the new religion and the equality of the early Muslims, so he returned to Christianity. It is reported that he settled in Constantinople with many of his followers. According to the tradition, he settled finally at Kharsana, near Melitene in Asia Minor, with 30,000 of his followers (Goeje, op. cit., p. 151).

[266] Michael the Syrian, II, 421; Abul Faradj, p. 94; Anonymous Chronicle of 1234, p. 191. According to Michael, the son of Sahrbaraz went over to the Arabs and settled in Emesa when the city was recovered by the Arabs. Another version (Patkanian, Essai d'une histoire, etc.) states that he was made prisoner during the battle after which he embraced Islam. Later he wrote Umar suggesting that he be given an army to conquer Persia and subject it to him. Umar appeared to like the idea, but the daughters of Chosroes II, who had been captured and held prisoner in Medina, pointed out the deceitfulness and so on of the family. Following this, Umar commanded that he be put to death by crucifixion.

During the engagement Amir ibn-abi-Wakkas[267] had arrived bearing with him the orders of the Caliph Umar to Abu Ubayda by which the latter was to assume complete command in Syria. Amir fell in the battle. Ubayda kept his appointment secret from all the others until the battle ended in order to avoid discord amongst the Arab leaders and not to displease Khalid ibn-Walid who was then generalissimo of the armies (See Note VIII).

The Byzantine cavalry that had survived the massacre of Yarmuk attempted to slow down and halt the Arab advance in the plain of Djabiya, but it failed to do so.[268]

3.

When Heraclius, who was then at Antioch, learned of the destruction of his army at the river Yarmuk, he realized that Syria was lost to the Empire. He could not quickly assemble a new army. He had required more than 15 months to raise the army that was lost at Yarmuk. Surrounded by an oppressive atmosphere, tired, aged, with no means of recuperating his losses and with the hatred he detected round him, he realized that he could do nothing for the moment.[269] Under the circumstances, he decided to return to Constantinople. He was accompanied by Martina and "the child."[270] It is recorded that when he was about to cross through the passes of the Taurus range to enter Cilicia, he bade a sad farewell to Syria. Nearly all chroniclers record what he had said. "Peace be with you Syria, what a beautiful land you will be to the enemy."[271]

Heraclius departed in the month of Shaban of the 15th year (September 636).[272] According to a Syrian tradition,[273] Heraclius ordered that the whole of Syria be plundered. The Syrian writers

[267] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 208.
[268] Dussaud, Topographie Historique de la Syrie, etc., p. 333.
[269] Theophanes, p. 337; Cedrenus, p. 745; Mirkhond, op. cit., p. 81; Elie Bar Sinaya, p. 82; Goeje, op. cit., p. 123.
[270] Nicephorus, p. 23.
[271] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 210; Mirkhond, op. cit., p. 81; Eutychius, p. 1098; The Chronicle of 1234, p. 196; Michael the Syrian, II, 424; Al Makine, p. 29; Goeje, op. cit., p. 123; Caetani, Annali, III, p. 609.
[272] Goeje, op. cit., p. 123; Eutychius, p. 1098. The latter records the third year of Umar. The third year begins in August 636.
[273] Michael the Syrian, II, 424; Abul Faradj, p. 95.

record that the Romans ravaged Syria in a worse fashion than did the Arabs, but I do not believe this to be factual.[274] If anything, it reflects the animosity of the Syrians for the Greeks.

It is reported that many inhabitants of the threatened areas abandoned their homeland and fled to the safety of the Empire.[275]

Before leaving, Heraclius ordered that the True Cross and all valuable treasures be removed from Jerusalem and brought to Constantinople.[276]

4.

Immediately after the battle, Khalid sent Habib ibn Maslama with a detachment of cavalry to pursue the remnants of the imperial army.[277]

The advance of the Arab forces was not made with great speed. They reached Damascus and began to lay siege to it once again.[278] It was this time probably that Abu Ubayda ibn-Djarrah assumed his position as governor of Syria and supreme commander of all Arab troops in Syria and Palestine. Ubayda had been one of the early companions of Mohammed and was one of the Prophet's chief supporters.

Although it is reputed that Umar for personal reasons replaced Khalid, this may not be absolutely the case. It appeared as though military operations in Syria would cease and the country would return to normal. Many clans and tribes prepared to migrate to these regions for permanent habitation. Consequently, there was a need to reorganize the newly conquered province, and as has been aptly said, "the sword of God" by which name Khalid was known must needs be make way for the "faithful guardian of the people." Ishak relates that Khalid had enriched himself not only at the cost of the defeated but of the Muslems themselves. His generosity and spendthrift ways made him suspect (according to Tabari) and very dangerous.[279]

[274] Bréhier, La nouvelle crise etc., p. 129.
[275] Chronicle of Séert, p. 307.
[276] Sébéos, p. 91.
[277] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 208.
[278] Theophanes, p. 338; Cedrenus, p. 746; George the Monk, p. 707; Michael the Syrian, II, 421.
[279] Goeje, op. cit., p. 125; Caetani, Annali ,III, 808; Pernice, op. cit., p. 282.

Damascus finally surrendered by treaty between the besieged and the besiegers at the close of the 15th year[280] (December 636-January 637).

At Damascus agreement was reached between the military leaders on the policies for conquering Syria and Palestine and the territory in which each emir was to operate.

Amr[281] was sent to conquer Jerusalem and to occupy central and southern Palestine, Shurahbil moved into the area of the Jordan and northern Palestine, whilst Yazid was to remain in Damascus as governor and, together with his brother Muawiyah, was to conquer central Syria and its coastal region. Ubayda with Khalid undertook the occupation of the remaining portion of Syria and the expulsion of the remaining Byzantine forces as far as Cilicia.

According to the Anonymous Chronicle of 1234 (p. 191), when the Arabs were advancing on Baalbek, there arrived in that city a Dux of the Romans at the head of 24,000 men, but was defeated. At all events, Baalbek (Heliopolis) was surrendered by treaty of capitulation. Baladhuri and Yakut relate that Ubayda, with Khalid leading his vanguard, proceeded in the direction of Emesa which they occupied following a new treaty. Then he advanced on Chalkis (Qinnersin) which he finally seized. The latter city had resisted but also finally yielded by treaty. They then advanced on Aleppo. But the leader of the vanguard in this instance was Iyad ibn-Ghanm,[282] the "Iados" of Theophanes. Aleppo also surrendered to Iyad. One city after another yielded including Hama (Epiphania) and Shaizar (Larissa), and at last the Arabs encamped before Antioch. Sayf relates that the general Minas with an army attempted to repulse the Arab advance but failed. He was defeated and slain in the course of the battle.[283]

An engagement was fought before the walls of Antioch between its garrison with the help of other Byzantine troops against the Arab forces, but once again the latter were victorious and the city surrendered after a brief siege.[284]

[280] Caetani, Annali, III, 617 and 788. He concludes that Damascus surrendered after a siege of two months, in December 636.

[281] Mirkhond, op. cit., p. 84.

[282] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 226.

[283] Caetani, Annali, III, 792; Muir, Annals etc., p. 201.

[284] Theophanes, p. 340; Cedrenus, p. 751; Agapius, op. cit., p. 216; Anonymous Chronicle of 1234, p. 198; Baladhuri, op. cit., pp. 211 & 227.

Yazid and Muawiyah occupied Beirut and other coastal towns of the Lebanon and Syria without encountering much opposition, but Tripolis put up a brief resistance. The Arabs had built a fortress to cut off the city from the landward side. Following this, many inhabitants fled by ship. An Arab garrison was installed in the city together with a colony of Jews.[285]

Syria was occupied in a little over a year, that is, the whole of the 16th (A.D. 637) and part of the 17th years (638).[286]

The orders of the Caliph were explicit, hence the comparative ease with which the entire province was conquered. The population initially was to pay the tax which it normally paid the Byzantine officials unless there was special treaty or agreement. The Arabs in return would provide guarantees of life and property to its inhabitants. They were to enjoy complete freedom of worship. It is also probable that they allowed some of the population that so wished to depart freely from Syria for Asia Minor and other parts of the Empire.

There exists a tradition to the effect that in 638 the imperial forces attempted to reoccupy Syria, but the entire problem is rather confusing.

It is recorded that Heraclius made a supreme effort to stir the Arab Christian tribes of Mesopotamia to rebellion. These tribes he assisted with as many men that he was able to collect at Amida.[287] These forces moved into the Antioch region. At the same time a Byzantine army disembarked at Antioch and reconquered the city.[288] Constantine, son of Heraclius, led the expedition. Aleppo, Kinnesrin and other towns were reoccupied. Ubayda was shut up in Emesa and appealed urgently for reinforcements.

The entire story is based on the information supplied by Sayf and the Chronicle of Aleppo of Kemal-ed-Din. But there is also a citation by one of the Byzantine writers confirming to a certain extent at least part of the Arabic narrative.

Umar ordered Sad Ibn-Waqqac who was then in Iraq to send an

[285] Baladhuri, pp. 194–195; Van Berchem, Materiaux pour un Corpus Inscriptionum Arabicum, XXV, p. 38.

[286] Caetani, Annali, III, 817.

[287] Finlay, A History etc., I, 362.

[288] Muir, op. cit., p. 216; Lebeau, op. cit., XI, 253; Glubb, op. cit., p. 207.

army into Mesopotamia and thus compel the Arabs of Mesopotamia to return to defend their homeland. Sad sent Qaqaa ibn-Amr (the son of Amr) with 4,000 men. After capturing Circessium he entered Mesopotamia. As a result, the Christian Arabs were forced to return to their country. Iyad[289] was also ordered to hasten to the support of Ubayda. Theophanes records, "Umar sent Iyad into Syria and he subdued the entire country for the Saracens." Of course, one cannot as usual rely upon the chronology of Theophanes.[290]

The Greeks, thus abandoned by their allies, were defeated and forced to withdraw to Antioch. The commander of the garrison, Nestorius, despite his determination to resist, was compelled, in view of threatened treachery within, to surrender the city to the Arabs[291] after the Byzantine army had withdrawn by sea.

Baladhuri[292] relates that because the inhabitants of Antioch had violated the initial treaty agreement which they had made with Ubayda, he sent against the city Iyad and Habib who reoccupied it anew after forcing it to surrender. Following an order of Umar a strong Arab garrison was stationed in Antioch.

The entire incident is substantiated in part by both Theophanes and the narrative of Baladhuri. The latter writes that the siege of Antioch was made by an army arriving from the sea.[293] I do not understand, therefore, why Caetani[294] should not accept this incident as factual.

5.

Having received his new command, Shurahbil entered Jordan and proceeded to occupy one city after another, each surrendering with little or no opposition. So depressed was the morale of the inhabitants of this area and so overwhelming the power of the Arabs in fighting prowess and in number that any thought of resistance soon evaporated. There exists, however, a certain difficulty in dating the fall of each city. And this difficulty arises from the fact

[289] Caetani, Annali, IV, 53–58.
[290] Theophanes, p. 339; Cedrenus, p. 746; Agapius, op. cit., pp. 216/476 and fn. 1; Anonymous Chronicle of 1234, p. 200.
[291] Lebeau, op. cit., XI, 259.
[292] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 227.
[293] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 228.
[294] Caetani, Annali, IV, pp. 56–57.

that certain towns had been taken in the period between the battle of Adjnadayn and that of Yarmuk. With the advance of the imperial army under the Sacellarius Theodore and the concentration of the Arab forces on the edge of the desert, these cities and towns were abandoned by the Arabs, but after the battle, the latter had reoccupied them. And this double occupation always without battle confounds the dating even more.

At all events, according to the tradition, Shurahbil occupied Tiberias by treaty. This occupation occurred before the engagement at Yarmuk.[295] After the battle, it was retaken, according to one version, by Amr, and according to another version, by Shurahbil.[296]

Shurahbil also occupied Scythopolis (Baizan), Acre, Tyre, Sephoris (Saffuriyeh), Sidon, Jarash (Geraza)[297] and the entire region which subsequently made up the Djund[298] or military district of Jordan.

Amr swept southwards from Damascus, crossed the Jordan and encamped at Jericho.[299] So terrified of the Arab might had the inhabitants become that all hastened to surrender.[300] Amr occupied in succession Neapolis, Lydda, Emmaus (Amwas), Eleftheropolis (Bayt Djibrin), Joppa (Jaffa),[301] and Sebasteia.[302] Gaza was also taken. The latter city was well fortified and together with Caesaria and Ascalon was the principal supply route of Palestine. Following the crushing defeats of the imperial forces and the elimination of all Byzantine detachments in the region, the city with its small garrison could hardly expect to resist the endless waves of the Muslim conqueror. Gaza surrendered in June/July of 637 (the 27th year

[295] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 179.

[296] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 179.

[297] Goeje, op. cit., p. 133; Caetani, Chronographia, I, 191; Le Strange, Palestine etc., p. 462.

[298] Military districts in which Arab detachments were stationed. According to tradition, Abu Bakr had organized four Djund, that of Homs (Emesa), Damascus, Jordan and Palestine (See E.I. n. ed., II, p. 616). I believe this tradition mistaken because Abu Bakr died before the occupation of Damascus and so on. Most probably the division into military districts was made by Umar.

[299] Sébéos, op. cit., p. 98.

[300] Ibid.

[301] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 213.

[302] Abul Fedae, Annales, I, 160.

of Heraclius), but the small garrison was imprisoned and it is reported that it suffered a terrible death.[303]

Goeje[304] believes that the conquest of Palestine took place in the 13th year of the Hegira (A.D. 634), but I cannot agree with his dating. It is probable that some cities had surrendered in that year but, as I have already pointed out, when news of the advance south of the imperial army had arrived, all of Palestine was evacuated by the Arabs.

Another tradition relates that the governor of Palestine Artabun (probably an Arabic corruption of "Aretius") had collected an army and resisted the advance of the Arabs. Then Yazid together with his brother Muawiyah arrived to reinforce Amr.[305] After his defeat at their hands, Artabun took refuge in Jerusalem initially and subsequently departed for Egypt.[306]

In the meantime, Amr had blockaded Jerusalem, and Abu Ubayda arrived with reinforcements to help him beleaguer the city.

The Samaritans helped the Arabs a great deal. Such was their blind hatred of the Romans that they willingly served as spies or as guides[307] for the invaders. They asked Ubayda for special favoured treatment and he drew up with them a treaty by which the Samaritans were to pay only the capita tax in exchange for the protection of their persons and property. They were exempted from the land tax (Kharadj).[308]

Certain difficulties arise concerning the siege and fall of Caesaria in Palestine. The city had been for long an administrative and military centre of the country. It was an extremely well-fortified city on the coast, the capture of which would have been difficult were it defended by a determined garrison.

[303] Delahaye, Passio etc.; Guillou, Prise de Gaza etc.; Pargoire, Les 60 soldats martyres etc.

[304] Goeje, op. cit., pp. 70–71, Goeje bases his view on a speech by Sophronius in which the latter complained that at Christmas 634, he could not make the pilgrimage to Bethlehem because of the Arabs. No one doubts that hordes of Arabs at that time had free reign up and down the country. But this does not mean that the fortified cities had been taken.

[305] Caussin de Perceval, op. cit., IV, 498.

[306] Muir, The Caliphate, etc., p. 145; Muir, Annals, etc., pp. 206–208.

[307] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 244; Caussin de Perceval, op. cit., IV, 498.

[308] Baladhuri, op, cit., p. 244; Goeje, op. cit., p. 149; Caetani, Chronographia, I, 201; Caussin de Perceval, op. cit.

The first to blockade and attack Caesaria was Amr.[309] It is said that probably in July 634 he attempted to take the city by assault.[310] After the fall of Jerusalem, in 638, Amr began to assemble his forces for the siege.[311] According to one version, Yazid came to the support of Amr with 17,000 men. Wakid, however, says that since Amr was anxious to depart for Egypt, he left a part of his army under the command of his son Abdullah to assist Yazid. There is yet another version, the authentic one, stating that Muawiyah took command of the operation and finally captured the city.[312]

Several legends have been built up round the siege and fall of Caesaria (see Note IX). The most authentic version records that since no further reinforcements were sent from Constantinople, the garrison began to lose heart, and the inhabitants were prepared to surrender the city. The version given by the Armenian edition of Michael the Syrian[313] is accurate in stating that thanks to the riots that had erupted in Constantinople after the death of Heraclius, the Arabs were able to conquer Caesaria in Palestine.

There are also great differences of opinion regarding the date of Caesaria's capture. I would tend to accept the year 641[314] as the most accurate. Baladhuri explicitly maintains that the occupation took place in September/October of the 19th year (641).[315] The sources give different dates that are accepted by contemporary historians,[316] and most record that the siege lasted 7 years. This

[309] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 216.

[310] Caetani, Chronographia, I, 157.

[311] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 216; Caetani, Annali, IV, 157.

[312] Theophanes, p. 341; Cedrenus, p. 753; Abul Faradj, p. 97; Elie bar Sinaya, p. 83; Tabari, op. cit., III, 409; Yakubi, ed. Wiet, p. 183; Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 217; Eutychius, p. 1102. Wellhausen (Die Kämpfe des Araber usw., p. 417), supports the view that Muawiyah came to Palestine when Amr had departed for Egypt.

[313] Michael Le Grand, ed. Langlois, p. 309

[314] Theophanes, p. 341. He dates the fall of Caesaria in the year of the Creation 6133 (A.D. 641), the first year of Heraclius II (641), the 8th of Umar (641/2); Cedrenus, p. 753.

[315] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 219.

[316] Agapius writes that Caesaria fell in the same year that Heraclius died (pp. 194/454). Elie Bar Sinaya records the year 951 (640) whereas the Anonymous Chronicle of 1234 the year 950 (A.D. 639); Yakubi the 18th year of the Hegira (639); Wakidi the 19th (640); Ibn Ishak the 20th (641); Eutychius the 7th year of Umar (640/641). Caetani, Bréhier (Vie et Morte de Byzance),

information I do not believe accurate. The actual siege lasted from 638 to 641.

After the fall of Caesaria, Ascalon followed suit.[317] Thus by the capture of Caesaria and Ascalon the conquest of the whole of Palestine was completed.

6.

In accordance with his instructions, Amr proceeded, as has been pointed out, from Damascus to central and southern Palestine. I presume that he reached the countryside round Jerusalem in the early months of 637 (see Note X). Amr possessed no siege engines that could destroy the well-fortified walls of Jerusalem. In view of this, he cut off all communication routes leading to the main coastal towns through which supplies and reinforcements could normally be sent to the closely beleaguered city, and specially the road leading from Caesaria.

Abu Ubayda became disconcerted by the protracted delay in the conquest of the city and came personally at the head of further reinforcements to assist Amr.[318] Ubayda arrived before the walled city in the 16th year of the Hegira (637). The aged Patriarch Sophronius was the heart and soul of the defence as he directed the defensive operations within with unflagging energy. But with the passage of time, seeing that the whole of Palestine had been subjected and that hope for assistance or reinforcements had vanished, he began to think of surrender. It appears that discouragement was universal and most of the defenders agreed to the need for opening negotiations for capitulation.

Then arrived the report that the Caliph Umar himself was in Syria. Aware of the vast conquests of the Arabs, he decided to visit Syria personally and to arrange matters concerning the administration of the newly conquered territories. The sources do not mention the precise reasons that brought Umar to Syria. It is reputed that Umar visited the country in the 17th year of the Hegira, that is, in

Gibbon in his History and Guillou accept 641. Diehl, Lambros, Duchêsne, Hitti, Huart, Lammens and Guilland support the year 640. Gibbon in a footnote (p. 440) and Muir say the year 638.

[317] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 219.

[318] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 214; Anonymous Chronicle of 1234, p. 199.

638 (Baladhuri and Elie Bar Sinaya). But Tabari says the 16th year of the Hegira.[319] The Arabs had organized at Al Djabiya[320] a large army camp which for long had remained as a kind of headquarters of the Djund (the military district) of Damascus. There assembled all the military leaders including Ubayda, Yazid and Amr together with the Council that ruled the Arab world except Ali. Besides matters concerning the organization and distribution of territories, all other problems involving the terms of occupation, the policy towards the population and the obligations of the inhabitants of the newly conquered lands were resolved. All decisions made at the meeting and the rules and policies that were adopted constituted the new basis for the administration of the territories, for land ownership, and for tax payments.[321] Those lands which had been abandoned by their previous owners were divided amongst the Muslems.

There exists a tradition to the effect that when Umar was at Djabiya, a delegation arrived from the city of Jerusalem to ask of him terms for the capitulation, and furthermore, that the delegates beseeched him to go to Jerusalem in person because the city wished to come to terms only with him.[322]

There are extant many traditional versions concerning the fall of Jerusalem.[323] One such has been described above. Another variation states that the terms of capitulation were given by Ubayda and were sanctioned by Umar. There is yet another tradition that the siege lasted two years (See Note XI).

Jerusalem surrendered in February 638 (see Note XII). Seated on a camel, Umar traversed the valley of the Jordan and halted at the Mount of Olives. There, too, Sophronius at the head of the clergy and the notables of the city awaited to receive Umar.[324]

Nearly all sources describe a very curious incident. Umar wished

[319] Wellhausen, Skizzen usw. VI, 67.

[320] Al-Djabiya was the main place of residence of the emirs of the Ghassanides. It was situated at a distance of some 80 kilometers south of Damascus not far from the modern Nawa. See E.I. n. ed., I, p. 369.

[321] Goeje, op. cit., p. 138.

[322] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 214; Yakubi, op. cit., p. 183; Abel, La Prise de Jerusalem etc.

[323] Caetani, Annali, III, 924.

[324] Vincent-Abel, Jerusalem etc., II, p. 931; Papadopoulos, History of the Church of Jerusalem, p. 249; Bréhier, La crise religieuse etc., p. 129.

to visit Jerusalem which was considered a holy city by the Arabs. Escorted by Sophronius, he entered the city in very soiled robes of woven camel hair. Sophronius begged him to accept the "sidonion" (white sheet) and new robes to wear. Umar refused, saying he had never accepted anything from anyone. But Sophronius persisted, then Umar wore these clean robes until his own were washed. After they were washed, he returned the robes to Sophronius.[325]

Umar departed for Medina after remaining in Jerusalem some 10 days[326]. Soon after, in March of 638, Sophronius died of deep bereavement at an advanced age of 84 or 85 years. After his death, the patriarchal throne remained unfilled for more than 50 years.[327]

In the 18th year of the Hegira (12th January 639 – 1st January 640) a terrible pestilence in the form of bubonic plague struck Palestine.[328] The initial focal point appeared to be the town of Amwas. The pestilence spread rapidly through the whole of Syria by way of the Christian Arabs and as far as the military encampment at Al-Djabiya.[329]

It is reputed that the plague claimed the lives of 25,000 Muslems. No report exists on the number of non-Muslem victims. Among those in the early phase to succumb was the military governor of Syria Abu Ubayda. In his place Umar appointed Yazid. But he, too, succumbed to the plague as did Shurahbil, and Umar then appointed as generalissimo of all the territories that had been conquered Muawiyah ibn-Sufyan.[330] Many companions of the Prophet were also victims of the pestilence.[331]

[325] Theophanes, p. 339; Cedrenus, p. 746; Agapius, p. 215; Michael the Syrian II, p. 425.

[326] Agapius, p. 194, who writes that Umar remained for 40 days; Chronicle Seert p. 304; Elie Bar Sinaya, p. 83; Baethgen, Fragmente usw., p. 111.

[327] Grumel, op. cit., p. 451. Eutychius, p. 1100, records that the see remained vacant for 29 years. According to Papadopoulos (op. cit., p. 272), the irregularity continued until 674.

[328] Michael the Syrian, II, 431. He places the epidemic in the year 951 (A.D. 640). Elie Bar Sinaya, p. 83, says 950 (639). Baladhuri, op. cit., 215; Tabari, op. cit., III, 434; Mirkhond, p. 168. All agree with the 18th year of the Hegira, including both Yakubi and El-Bakri.

[329] Caetani, Annali, IV, 4–24.

[330] Theophanes, p. 340; Cedrenus, p. 752; Agapius, p. 304; Baladhuri, p. 215; Mirkhond, pp. 84–88; Caetani, Annali, IV, 24; Goeje, op. cit., p. 168.

[331] Tabari, III, 435–439.

7.

The conquest of Byzantine Mesopotamia by the Arab invaders presents only few chronological difficulties.

Mesopotamia was inhabited by an Aramaic population for the most part that had been converted to Christianity. The great majority was Monophysitic and hostilely disposed to Byzantine administration. In the meantime, many Arab clans and tribes had slowly penetrated and settled in the region, thus increasing the Arabism of the province.[332] In fact, Mesopotamia was overrun by Arab settlers and the country soon fell into the Arabic sphere of influence.[333] After the advance of the Arab armies into the north of Syria and the conquest of the city of El-Raqqah[334] on the bank of the Euphrates, the situation became extremely difficult for the country. The imperial governor of the territory who completely lacked a standing regular army, with only a few forces from the ranks of the local militia at his disposal, soon realized that no serious resistance could be brought to bear against the powerful Arab threat. Theophanes and some Syrian sources[335] record that the governor was a certain John, known as Cataeus, who visited the headquarters of Iyad ibn-Ghanm at Kinnesrin (Chalkis) and agreed to pay the Arabs 100,000 gold coins yearly on the condition that the Arabs would not cross the Euphrates "either militarily or peacefully."

John returned to Edessa where he collected funds for the first year's payment and sent it to Iyad.[336]

On learning of the agreement Heraclius was understandably enraged and summoned John from the province. He reprimanded

[332] Caetani, Annali, IV, 33.

[333] Wellhausen, Skizzen usw., VI, 84.

[334] Raqqah or Callinicum, ancient city of Mesopotamia on the Euphrates built by the Seleucid Callinicus.

[335] Theophanes, p. 340. He dates the incident in 636, the 27th year of Heraclius (636/637). But it is not possible that the treaty was made before the battle of Yarmuk and especially before the fall of Damascus. Since the invasion of the Arabs took place in 639 because they were not paid the tax for the following year (i.e. 639), I believe the more correct dating of the incident to be 638. Michael the Syrian, II, 426; Chronicle of Seert, p. 233; Agapius, pp. 216/476. The Anonymous Chronicle of 1234 give somewhat the same information as Theophanes.

[336] Theophanes, p. 340; Anonymous Chronicle of 1234, p. 200.

him severely for coming to an agreement with the enemy without his permission and forthright sent him into exile. In his place he sent Ptolemy as general (Theophanes) and patricius to govern Byzantine Mesopotamia.[337]

The next year the Arabs claimed the annual tribute money, but Ptolemy refused to pay this, following which Iyad was ordered to invade the country.

Wakidi states that Iyad at the head of 5,000 men crossed the Euphrates during the month of Shaban in the 18th year of the Hegira (August 639) and advanced against Edessa.[338] According to the Byzantine and Syriac sources, the inhabitants of Edessa hastened to reach an agreement and opened the gates of the city to the enemy.

After the occupation of Edessa, Iyad proceeded to Constantini[339] which resisted. Iyad carried the town by assault and massacred the garrison and part of the population.[340] Dara was also carried by storm and all the Greeks who were in the city were put to the sword. Other cities including Harran (Carrhae), Callinicum, Amida, Martyropolis, Nisibis, Circessium (El-Bousera), Batnae etc., surrendered without a fight. It appears that Rezaina resisted and was also taken by assault.[341] The Arabs put to the sword also numerous monks who inhabited the different monasteries in the Marde mountains.[342]

Iyad, who had in the meantine been appointed emir of Mesopotamia, despatched Habib ibn-Maslamah to Samosata and Melitene. The former city surrendered after putting up a brief resistance.

[337] Theophanes, p. 340; Cedrenus, p. 751; Agapius, p. 216; Michael the Syrian, II, 426; Anonymous Chronicle of 1234, p. 200.

[338] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 270. Tabari (III, 428) writes May of 638. Theophanes records the year of the Creation 6130 (638), the 29th year of Heraclius (638/639) and the 5th of Umar (638/639). Michael the Syrian cites the year 951 (A.D. 640), whilst Elie Bar Sinaya maintains the year 948 (A.D. 637).

[339] Ancient city of Mesopotamia, previously known as Maximianopolis, about 80 kilometers east of Edessa and today the hamlet of Weranher or Tella.

[340] Theophanes, p. 340; Agapius, p. 217; Michael the Syrian, II, 426; Chronicle of 1234, p. 201.

[341] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 276.

[342] Chronicle of the year 724, p. 114; Liber Calipharum, p. 116; Michael the Syrian, II, 419.

Thus Mesopotamia was completely subjected within a year without showing any significant resistance.[344]

8.

The fall of the once great and powerful Persian empire occurred at about this time. The conquest of Persia should not actually be included in this volume, but for a better understanding of the flow of events in this period a brief description may be called for.

Following the withdrawal of Khalid, the tribal chieftain of Persian Mesopotamia Al-Mouthanna continued to make razzias that brought much wealth and plunder to his tribe. But he found himself in difficulties and asked for reinforcements from Umar. The latter despatched as many troops as he could spare under Abu Ubayda Ibn-Masud but these were limited in number due to the drain of men involved in the continuous engagements in Syria.[345] Abu Ubayda Ibn-Masud was defeated and lost his life after several battles.[346]

The Arabs of the region again asked urgently for reinforcements. Umar sent Sa'd ibn-abi-Waqqas and ordered all those troops that were available in Syria to hasten to the help of the Arabs of Iraq. Numerous Arabs of the Christian tribes of the desert, of northern Syria and Byzantine Mesopotamia, among them the Banu Tamim, 2,000 from the tribe of Taghlib, the Banu Iyad, tribes of the large federation of the Qays-Aylan and so on, flocked to support the Arab contingent of Iraq. The imaginations of these warrior tribes had been excited by the wealth that their kinsmen had acquired in their various marauding expeditions.

After mustering and organizing his new army S'ad set out for the region south of the Euphrates in the 16th year (637).[347] The Persians

[343] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 273.

[344] Pernice, L'Imperatore etc., p. 295; Caetani, Annali, IV, 36–38 and 165; Duval, Histoire etc. d'Edesse; Dennett, Conversion etc., p. 42.

[345] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 401.

[346] Rawlinson, The Seventh etc., pp. 544–545.

[347] Theophanes, p. 341, writes that in the year 6131 (639), the 30th of Heraclius' reign (639/640), the Arabs marched against the Persians and so on, that the King "Ormisdas(?)" was routed, etc. Bar Sinaya dates the invasion in 948 (A.D. 637), and Khuwarizmi (Baethgen, Fragmente usw.) and Wakidi (Caetani, Annali, III, 629) agree with him. The remaining chroni-

had assembled their forces under the command of Rustem, but he made a fatal blunder by being drawn across the Euphrates. His army advanced along the edge of the desert and met the Arab army at Al-Kadisiyah, 30 kilometers southeast of Hirah to which point the Arabs had withdrawn once they sighted the Persian force.[348] For three days a prolonged, heated and desperate engagement took place. In the meantine, the Arabs received further reinforcements estimated from 6 to 38,000 men[349] and succeeded in overwhelming the Persian army. Rustem was killed in the battle.

Following further skirmishes and battles, the Arabs seized Seleucia (Veh Ardasher) and the next year took Ctesiphon wherein they found immense booty and treasure. They captured the daughters of Chosroes II and sent them to Umar.[350]

The Persian monarch Yazdagerd III (and not Ormisdas as Theophanes inaccurately records) with indomitable spirit and energy continued to muster new armies which were crushed by the Arabs.[351] The once proud and powerful military empire crumbled to the dust. Yazdagerd made one last desperate effort by coming to an agreement with the Turks.[352] But the latter, or rather the "Thetals," as Sébéos names them, seized and murdered him in 651.[353]

In such manner did the Persian kingdom cease to exist. The entire country was occupied by the Arabs.[354]

clers, although writing of imaginary and mythical events, do not help with the dating. See Müller, Der Islam usw., p. 221; Christensen, L'Iran sous les Sassanides, p. 502, gives as date of the battle 636.

[348] Spuler, Iran usw., p. 8.

[349] Sébéos, op. cit., p. 104; Tabari says 12,000 men. See Spuler, op. cit.

[350] Theophanes, p. 341; Cedrenus, p. 752.

[351] Theophanes, p. 341; Agapius, p. 211/471; The Seert Chronicle, p. 260; Sébéos, p. 100; Michael the Syrian, II, 421; The Anonymous Chronicle of 724, p. 114; Al-Makine, p. 23.

[352] Sébéos, p. 132; Acoghig de Daron, p. 152. On the Turks see Volume I of the present history, pp. 57–58.

[353] Sébéos, p. 132. He records the 11th year of Constantine (651/652) and the 20th year of Yazdagerd (651/652). Spuler, op. cit., p. 20.

[354] Rawlinson, op. cit.; Christensen, op. cit.; Huart-Delaporte, L'Iran Antique etc.; Müller, Der Islam in Morgen usw.

CHAPTER V

THE CONQUEST OF EGYPT

Some difficulties arise concerning the details of the conquest of Egypt. Rather than being helpful in resolving these problems, the Greek sources unfortunately confuse matters even more. Our primary source in this instance is the Copt (Monophysite) Bishop of Nikiu, John, who as has been pointed out in the first chapter was almost a contemporary of the events unfolding in that part of the world.[355] It is indeed a pity that the entire portion of his chronicle dealing with the early phases of the Arab conquest of Egypt is missing.

The Arab chroniclers who recorded the events 200 and more years after the invasion provide much valuable information, but again we are confronted with an admixture of fact and fancy and oftentimes insidious data.

One of the major difficulties derives from the Greek sources. Theophanes[356] records that when Cyrus, Patriarch of Alexandria, had learned of the "impetus" of the Arab drive, he became frightened of their cupidity, and agreed to pay them an annual tribute of 100,000[357] gold solidi, or, in the words of Theophanes, "pledging tribute".

He thus preserved Egypt for three years. Neither Nikiu nor the Arab chroniclers make any reference to this. But if, in fact, the information supplied by Theophanes is true, the agreement must have taken place in 637, that is, immediately following the battle of Yarmuk and the reoccupation of Damascus, although Theophanes dates the agreement in 634/635, at a time when the Arabs were still

[355] John of Nikiu was born at the time of the Arab conquest and wrote at the close of the 7th Century.

[356] Theophanes, p. 338.

[357] In the Latin translation of Anastasius the Librarian, a figure of 200,000 gold solidi is mentioned. The same amount is given by Agapius (p. 211/471), Michael Syrus, Abul Faradj Bar Hebraeus (ed. Bruns and Kirsh, II, 108) and the Anonymous Chronicle of 1234.

preoccupied with razzias. Theophanes adds that when Heraclius had learned of the agreement he was very angry with Cyrus whom he accused of betraying the gold of Egypt to the Saracens. This version appears in some variants in the Syrian sources.[358]

Nicephorus[359] gives another version. Initially he writes that when Heraclius was in the "Eastern parts," he sent the general John of Barca to confront the "Saracens in Egypt." Immediately following, he records that Cyrus favoured an agreement with "Ambrum" (i.e. Amr), and that he was willing to pay an annual tribute and moreover, that he promised to give in marriage Eudocia, the Augusta, or another daughter of the Emperor, provided that the Arab chieftain would be baptised a Christian. Amr and his army accepted the conditions.

No scholar today accepts the Nicephorus version. Yet, could not that portion of the narrative be correct concerning John of Barca and Marianus the Cubicularius? Both persons are mentioned by John Nikiu, hence their existence is at least confirmed. But the part containing the date of their despatch to Egypt cannot possibly be accepted. Heraclius abandoned the East towards the end of 636. Consequently, on the basis of what Nicephorus writes, the Emperor should have sent them to Egypt about that time to fight the Arabs. In that case, we must accept that the Arabs had already begun to invade the country, or at least, were threatening it, at the end of 636 at the latest. In other words, we must accept the evidence of Theophanes. But all the Arab, Syrian and other sources explicitly specify that 639 was the year of the invasion.

Whence did this tradition come? With the present state of the sources, it is wholly impossible to reach some satisfactory conclusion. If we were to accept the Greek and part of the Syrian sources, then we must agree that when Amr, after the recapture of Damascus, had reached Palestine (the end of 636 and beginning of 637), he attempted or threatened to undertake an invasion of Egypt at which time, therefore, the Cyrus-Amr agreement was made and Heraclius had sent his generals. But this conflicts with the evidence that soon

[358] According the Michael Syrus, II, 425, and Abul Faradj Bar Hebraeus (ed. Wallis Budge, p. 95), the pact was made between Cyrus and Umar "king of the Arabs" and on the condition that the Arabs would not enter Egypt. Agapius adds that for three years no Arab set foot in the country.
[359] Nicephorus, pp. 24,25.

after the pact, Cyrus was recalled to Constantinople (according to Theophanes and Nicephorus) and did not return to his See until after the death of the Emperor (according to John Nikiu). But we know from papyrus sources that Cyrus was in Egypt in 639. Following this, we are forced to admit that if any agreement were reached, then this pact was made at another date, probably during the siege of Babylon (640–641) and that with the passage of time, the tradition altered the date. We should not lose sight of the fact that both Theophanes and Nicephorus were not contemporary writers.

The identity of Mucacius or Macucas, another personage who played a role in the events of Egypt, about whom the Arab chroniclers and the Coptic and Syrian writers report as coming to an agreement with Amr, is extremely difficult. Nikiu makes no reference whatsoever to the person. On the other hand, he mentions Cyrus as the patriarch, Domentianus as the governor of Alexandria, and Theodore as general and Augustalius of Egypt.[360] But the Arab sources refer to Mucacius as the governor of Memphis or as the leader of the Monophysites or as a tax official and so on. Originally, it was accepted by scholars that Mucacius was a certain George, the son of Menas, pagarch (prefect) and most probably a general. It is quite possible that Mucacius is a corruption of the Greek word "megafkis" which means magnificent or majestic and so forth.[361]

After having examined all the sources, Butler[362] concluded that "Mucacius" was Cyrus himself. His conclusions have been generally accepted.[363]

Of late, the problem has again been raised and the identification made by Butler doubted.[364]

But I will not dwell at length on the problem since one can by interpreting the sources in different ways reach both conclusions. Modern historians, I suspect, have been confused by two agreements, the treaty that was made at Babylon and the treaty by the Patriarch Cyrus made also at Babylon surrendering Alexandria. This same confusion had arisen earlier among the Arab chroniclers.[365]

[360] John Nikiu, ed. Zotenberg, p. 544.
[361] Abu Salih, pp. 80–83.
[362] Butler, The Conquest of Egypt, Appendix C.
[363] Papadopoulos, History of the Alexandrian Church, p. 469.
[364] Callimachus, The Last Days of Greek Rule in Egypt.
[365] Caetani, Annali, IV, 94.

With the sources in the state in which they are today, all such problems will continue to exist and I am sure will continue to remain unanswered. We must be content, unfortunately, with hypothesis and supposition.

I.

In the first volume of the present history, I touched upon the military organization of Egypt.[366] I will give in a few words a picture of this organization in order the better to understand why Egypt was occupied with such effortless ease by the Arabs.

Egypt had been divided into five ducal areas.[367] There was no single military administration responsible for the entire province. The "duces" were independent one of the other. The dux of Alexandria and Augustalius (i.e. the representative of the Emperor) was the most important, but he had no jurisdiction over the other duces.

Egypt possessed a wholly political organisation. The duces were also heads of the armies in their respective ducal territories. The Byzantine authorities had set up the frontier zones efficiently enough since the only foreseeable danger came from raids on the part of nomadic tribes for booty.

The army was drawn from local levies and consisted for the most part of native troops. And consequently, the largest percentage of the army was drawn from the Coptic population, since the Copts made up the largest part of the population of the country. It should be pointed out once again that the term Copt refers to the native Christian of Egypt who was a Monophysite.

This army was intended primarily for defense. It was more of a local militia or policing force which assured the dux of law and order and especially assisted him in the collection of taxes.[368]

The total strength of the army in Egypt amounted to 25,000–

[366] See Volume I, pp. 81–82 and 111.

[367] Gelzer, Die Genesis usw., p. 5; Maspéro, Organisation militaire etc., pp. 69–78.

[368] Rouillard, L'Administration etc., p. 39; Diehl, L'Égypte Chrétienne etc., p. 477.

30,000[369] men, including the town garrisons. Of these, a few thousand made up the frontier guards. In Egypt proper, the army numbered about 20–25,000 men while the remainder constituted the garrisons of Libya and Tripoli.

Because of the limited scope of the army rarely was any outstanding person from the ranks or the officer corps selected for the position of dux. The officers themselves were natives inexperienced in war and for the most part Copts.

The garrisoned cities were well fortified, they therefore put up a good resistance.[370] But many times, the duces would leave the garrisons undermanned for reasons of economy and personal gain.[371]

Such then was the military organisation of Egypt in general outline since the days of Justinian.[372]

The lack of military coordination was the main reason accounting for the astounding success of the Arabs who, although much fewer in number, managed locally and on the field of battle to appear much superior in numbers. The different duces were never able to combine their forces for joint action against the enemy invaders.

The dux of Libya and his detachment did not take an active part in the defense of Egypt. The dux of the Thebaid and his detachment did not give battle until the Arabs appeared before Antinoe when the dux himself abandoned his forces and fled to Alexandria.

Corruption in the administration was also a basic cause for the fall of the country. Due to the burdensome and oppressive taxation, the middle class had all but disappeared. The large landowners constituted a powerful aristocracy able to oppose any local administration that threatened its interests.

The hatred of the indigenous population for Byzantium and the imperial administration was unbounded. Cyrus's inflexibility in matters relating to the new ecclesiastical policy aggravated the population even more and sapped its will to resist the Arab invader. The pressures brought to bear and the persecutions[373] launched

[369] Maspéro, op. cit., p. 117; Boak, Byzantine Imperialism etc.; Amélineau, La conquête de l'Égypt, etc.; Wiet, L'Égypte Arabe, p. 16; Bell, Egypt etc., p. 132.

[370] Die von Guidi etc., ed. Nöldeke, p. 45.

[371] John Nikiu, p. 571.

[372] Gelzer, op. cit.

[373] Samuel de Qalamoun, ed. Amélineau; Isaac, Patriarche Copte, Histoire etc., ed. Amélineau; Abu Salih, pp. 229–231.

against the natives following the publication of the "Ecthesis," contributed much to this animosity. Small wonder, then, that despite the plundering tactics of the Arab and his reputation for cruelty, he was looked upon by the inhabitants of Egypt as a liberator and one to help him throw off the hated yoke of Constantinople.

And thus, the envy of one governor for the other, corruption in the administration and the harsh methods of collecting taxes, the lack of any understanding between the various unwarlike duces and hence complete lack of military coordination, added to the intense hatred of the indigenous population for the Byzantines, such was the picture of Egypt on the eve of the Arab invasion.

Another curious aspect of affairs in Egypt concerns the measures taken by Heraclius. After the battle of Yarmuk, he was well aware that the Eastern provinces were being lost to the Empire. It is impossible to conceive that he was unaware of the danger facing Egypt. Heraclius had grown up in Africa and his family in fact had large estates in the area of Pentapolis (Cyrenaica). Hence he knew well the military weaknesses of the region and the existing hatred of the inhabitants for the imperial administration. To confront the Arab menace, besides the despatch of a regular army, a general would be needed to take command of all the military forces in Egypt. The coordination of activities would be required and all existing means for the defense mobilised. It is certain that Heraclius had confidence in the Patriarch Cyrus who, it is said, though it is not certain, was also the civil governor of Egypt. Most urgently of all a unified military command was needed. But no such measures were taken. John Nikiu informs us that Cyrus undertook to repair certain fortresses, especially the walls of Babylon.[374] Nicephorus records that Heraclius sent the general John of Barca (evidently the military governor of Barca in the Pentapolis) and Marinus with a body of regulars from Thrace. When these moves took place is unknown. Judging by the narrative of Nicephorus, it appears that the expedition occurred after the entrance of the Arabs into Egypt or as he writes, "against the Saracens in Egypt." But no one of these generals appears as supreme commander or generalissimo to coordinate the armed forces in the country.

[374] Caetani, Annali, IV, 166; Amélineau, La conquéte etc.

It is my belief that Heraclius, now old and ill, worn down by the cares of state, surrounded by an oppressive atmosphere of intrigue and machination in Constantinople, did not concern himself with the danger threatening Egypt. With the despatch of small bodies of regulars and able generals it is possible that he believed ample support for the defense of the country had been made. And perhaps the three year respite during which the Arab threat against Egypt appeared to have subsided may have dispelled his immediate fears. At all events, one thing is certain, that a supreme commander was not sent to coordinate and direct the defenses of Egypt.

2.

The Arab sources present some doubt in the matter of how and when the invasion of Egypt had been decided upon. According to Baladhuri,[375] when Amr was besieging Caesaria he was informed that Yazid was appointed military governor in the place of Ubaydah. He then left his son in charge of the siege and departed with 3500 men for Egypt. Umar was angered by his insubordination and ordered him to return, unless he had already crossed the frontier into Egypt. Amr received the order when he was at Al-Arish.[376] Baladhuri also gives another version, that Umar ordered Amr to advance on Egypt when he was still laying siege to Caesaria.[377] Eutychius records both versions.

Al-Hakam and Yakut, in agreement with the narrative of Makrizi,[378] relate that when Umar had gone to Al-Djabiya,[379] Amr hastened to meet with him and asked for permission to invade Egypt. Umar initially refused the request,[380] but Amr persisted, pointing out the wealth of Egypt and arguing that its conquest would be an easy matter. Umar finally yielded and allowed him to

[375] Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, p. 335; Al-Kindi, ed. Guest.
[376] Al-Arish or Rhenoculura, city of Egypt near the Palestinian border.
[377] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 335.
[378] Makrizi, ed. Casanova, pp. 112–113.
[379] See Chapter IV, para 6.
[380] Umar's refusal was to be expected. Palestine had not yet been subjected. Jerusalem was still resisting the Arabs. The coastal towns, well-fortified, gave no indication of surrendering, and a close beleaguerment of these was difficult. The Arabs possessed no siege engines nor a fleet to blockade them from the sea.

depart with 4,000 men. When Umar returned to Medina, he had a dream in which he was informed that God did not wish the invasion to take place. Following this, he wrote to Amr to abandon the attempt unless he had already crossed the frontier. The bearer of the message reached Amr at Rafah,[381] but Amr declined to accept the message and continued his advance. When he reached the outskirts of Al-Arish, he accepted the letter and opened it. But he ascertained that he was already in Egypt, hence the order for return was no longer valid.

Amr's departure for Egypt without the permission of the Caliph is generally not accepted by modern historians (See Note XIII).

When Amr Al-Asi entered Egypt he was 45 years of age.[382] He was a descendant of the great tribe of the Quraysh from Mecca. He was short and swarthy, had a large head, long beard and a broad chest.[383] He could impose his will on others, was brilliant as an individual and as a political leader. It is quite possible that he was not an outstanding military man, though he distinguished himself in the Egyptian campaign, but he was a good organizer,[384] lively, eloquent of speech and very cunning.[385] Butler describes him as a poet and musician, and adds that he was an unusual combination of soldier, theologian, adventurer and poet all rolled in one. As a young man he had visited Egypt as a merchant, and he was well acquainted with the wealth of the country, but also aware of the dispersion of the Byzantine forces in the area.[386]

Amr advanced against Egypt at the head of 3,500–4,000 men, horsemen for the most part. His army was comprised of men from

[381] Rafah, the ancient Raphia. Ptolemy (p. 989) places it in Judaea and calls it Raphia. Hierocles locates it in the province of Palestine and under the Metropolitan of Caesaria. Yaqut, II, 796, states that it was the last station on the road leading to Egypt and on the edge of the sandy desert area (Marmadji, p. 80).

[382] Some question has arisen concerning Amr's age. Ibn Khalikan records that Amr died at the age of 90 years in 664. In the Supplement of his book, Butler rejects this tradition and after careful examination of sources concludes that Amr was 45 when he began the invasion of Egypt.

[383] Abu Salih, pp. 75–80, based on Al-Hakam.

[384] Becker in C.M.H., II, 350.

[385] Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 160.

[386] Amélineau, La Conquête de l'Égypte, etc.; Caetani, Annali, IV, 324; Lane-Pool, A History of Egypt, p. 1.

different tribes, among them the Akk of Yemen,[387] the Tujib,[388] and the Tanuss, members of the large federation of tribes known as the Quda'a who had settled in Syria and Palestine.[389] Probably not a single Arab from Mecca was in the detachment, but many Christians of Syria who had embraced Islam[390] had enlisted in the force. The Arabs were well armed. From papyrus sources we know that they wore long coats of mail, a cone-shaped helmet of metal, and bore a round shield. They were armed with lance, sword and bow with arrows.[391]

Amr reached Al-Arish or Rhenoculura on the 12th December 639.[392] Although a fortified city with a frontier fortress[393] it lacked a garrison and surrendered without resistance.[394]

Amr advanced along the caravan and invaders' route far inland from the coastline and through the desert region. He reached Pelusium,[395] formerly a strongly fortified town, that still possessed a small garrison. Amr had no siege engines and blockaded the town for one[396] or two months[397] during which time constant skirmishes

[387] Caetani, Annali, IV, 260.

[388] Kindi, ed. Guest.

[389] Graf, Geschichte usw., I, 25.

[390] Butler, The Arab Conquest etc., p. 198.

[391] Canard, L'Expansion militaire etc.

[392] There is some difficulty about the dating of the Arab penetration in Egypt. The Arab chroniclers give different dates. Al-Hakam says December 12, 639; Baladhuri January 640; Tabari December 639; Yakut 639; Makrizi December 12, 639; and Severe d'El-Eschmounein June 639. Today Abd al-Hakam's date is universally accepted and it is in part confirmed by the evidence of Baladhuri, Al-Makine, Tabari and Yakut. This date is accepted by Weil, Geschichte usw., Butler, The Arab Conquest etc., and Amélineau, La Conquête de l'Égypte etc .,who in fact believes that the dating can be derived from John Nikiu as well.

[393] Yakubi, ed. Wiet, p. 183.

[394] Maspéro, L'Organisation militaire etc., p. 28, n. 3, and p. 119.

[395] Pelusium, in Arabic El-Ferma or El-Farama, the Peremoun of the Copts, a very ancient town and strong citadel of Augustamnian Egypt. The town eventually disappeared and only its ruins remain. It appears that the Persians had destroyed a section of its fortifications in A.D. 616–617 and its walls had not been repaired since that time. It was considered the key to eastern Egypt.

[396] Eutychius, p. 1103; Makrizi, op. cit., p. 115; Amélineau, op. cit.; Hitti, op. cit., p. 161; Lane Pool, op. cit., p. 2; Wiet, L'Egypte Arabe, p. 4; Butler, op. cit., p. 211.

[397] Yakut, op. cit.; Maspéro, op. cit., pp. 135; Bréhier, La fin du regne etc., p. 136.

and small engagements took place with the troops of the garrison. Finally he took the town by assault. The conquest of Pelusium assured Amr of the only road communicating with Palestine and a possible retreat route. But more important still, it made possible a free and unencumbered route for the constant reinforcements that were to arrive.

Up to that moment the Byzantine forces took no action to repulse the Arabs. With a handful of men, the dux of Augustamnian Egypt had to confront the enemy on his own.[398]

Amr quitted Pelusium towards the middle or end of January 640 (according to Baladhuri, in the 19th year of the Hegira). But he did not follow the usual route along the length of the eastern arm of the Nile. He preferred instead to take the desert route which provided greater security for his army. He reached Bilbeis[399] by way of Wadi Toumilat and the bitter lakes. There the commander was Aretion or Artabun[400] with a somewhat stronger force but much less in number than that of Amr.

Amr's detachment had been in the course of its advance growing in numbers. Many of the Bedouins of Egypt, the nomadic semi-Arab tribes of Rachidat and Lakhm,[401] joined Amr's army. There existed different Arab tribes that roamed in the regions between Mt. Sinai and the Thebaid. The city of Keft was considered half-Arabic. But it is difficult, due to lack of sources, to estimate the value of the assistance these tribes gave to the invaders, as well as the numbers that enlisted in Amr's forces.

Amr was well aware of the riskiness of his ambitious operation. He would have great cities and well-fortified towns to overcome with a few thousand horse together with what nomad reinforcements he could collect, and without siege engines. He therefore appealed for reinforcements from Umar.

Aretion launched a sudden attack at nightfall against Amr but his army was destroyed. Ibn-Khaldoun gives completely imaginary figures for the losses suffered.[402] Following the defeat, Bilbeis was

[398] Maspéro, op. cit., p. 119.

[399] The ancient Coptic city of Felbis, situated 30 miles northeast of Cairo.

[400] Butler, op. cit., p. 215.

[401] Makrizi, op. cit., p. 115.

[402] 1,000 dead and 3,000 prisoners. It is doubtful whether the entire Augustamnian force amounted to so many men.

forced to capitulate. Its inhabitants, the majority of whom were Copts, had refused to fight. The entire operation against Bilbeis lasted about a month. Hence the city surrendered in the early part or the middle of March 640. Up until that time, the local commanders and administrators had to face the threatening situation alone.

The remarkable fact about the entire situation is that had the Byzantines, immediately after news of the advance of the Arabs into Egypt, which in any case they should have expected, collected sufficient forces, say 10 to 12,000 men, in this area, they could perhaps have routed and pushed back with comparative ease the 3 to 4,000 men of Amr.

3.

Babylon (Misr or Fostat, the modern Cairo) was an extremely well-fortified city. John of Nikiu (pp. 553–554) maintains that the commander of the military forces in Egypt was Theodore. I do not believe this to be the case (see Note XIV). He was probably the dux of the Ducate of Egypt and Augustalius. In any event, with news of the advance of the Arabs, the Patriarch Cyrus and Theodore proceeded to Babylon where they began to assemble the army of the Ducate of Egypt.

Amr advanced towards Babylon always keeping to the edge of the desert[403] and the cultivated fields. After going through Heliopolis (Aoun or Ain Schams) he moved in the direction of Umm Dunain or Tendunyas, according to John of Nikiu.[404]

Skirmishes and minor engagements took place during the first few weeks. Amr's forces were not large enough to set up a blockade round Babylon. He divided his army into small groups and proceeded to plunder the districts round the city and give minor battle to the imperial troops. Finally he attacked and occupied Umm Dunain. He captured there many boats with which he could transport his troops easily from one bank of the river to the other.

[403] Sevére d'Eschmounein, pp. 229/493; Abu Salih, pp. 71–75.

[404] Butler and other scholars identify Umm Dunain with the Tendunyas of Nikiu (p. 557). Makrizi claims that this site was a lake port of Misr. Tendunyas probably was a fortress of Antonius. See Amélineau, Geographie etc., pp. 491–492. According to Butler, the tower of Tendunyas was near the park and Esbekiah square in modern Cairo. See also Amélineau, La conquete etc.; Maspéro, op. cit., p. 30.

Nevertheless, Amr feared a sudden attack on the part of the imperial troops concentrated in Babylon. For this reason he decided to withdraw (Amélineau writes "to disappear") his forces further back and to wait for expected reinforcements. He crossed over to the western bank of the Nile and advanced against the province of Fayum in the Ducate of Arcadia.

The Dux of Arcadia was a certain Theodosius. Arsinoe[405] was the capital city of the Ducate. John Marus[406] was commander of the troops in the area and Domentianus was governor in Arsinoe.

John had placed a garrison in the city of Lahoun (16 kilometers north of Arsinoe) and kept a careful eye on the movements of the Arabs. He finally succeeded in preventing their entrance into the depression leading to Arsinoe.[407] But in a reconnoitering expedition he was betrayed by Copts and Bedouins and slain.[408] Despite his various failures, Amr managed to occupy the town of Behnesa the population of which he slaughtered almost to a man.

The razzia into Fayum took place in May 640[409] and lasted a few weeks.

Probably not only his lack of success but the report that reinforcements were arriving convinced Amr that the wisest policy would be

[405] Capital of the prefecture of Arsinoe, so named by Ptolemy Philadelpheus in memory of his wife. In the Byzantine period it was the seat of the Dux and the Bishop.

[406] John Marus appears to have been an important personage. Zotenberg identifies him with John of Barca (See Nicephorus, p. 24). Butler does not accept this identity and believes that he was the general who delivered the "Ecthesis" to Cyrus and Pope Severinus, and cites Drapeyron, p. 389, who however does not mention the name of the person who delivered the "Ecthesis" to Cyrus. Nikiu states that a search was conducted for his body which was found and embalmed, then sent to Constantinople. See Nikiu, p. 556. This is ample evidence indicating that the person held an exalted position at the Byzantine court and had been sent to Egypt by the Emperor.

[407] Maspéro disagrees that the raid into Fayum occurred before the surrender of Babylon (op. cit., p. 34, fn. 1). Butler insists that according to Nikiu the razzia took place at that time. Milne, History of Egypt, p. 115, agrees with Butler. Diehl, L'Égypte Byzantine, p. 546; Glubb, The Great etc., p. 228; Caetani, Annali, IV, 167–168; Amélineau, op. cit. It is observed that if the Arab chroniclers make no reference to this raid, it is due to the fact that it was not successful.

[408] John Nikiu, p. 555.

[409] Caetani, Annali, IV, 168; Butler, op. cit., 225.

to withdraw to the north and unite with the fresh contingents from the east.

Before he had received the appeal from Amr, Umar was already preparing new detachments for Egypt. The first body of troops numbering 4,000 men appeared in the country towards the end of May and the beginning of June 640.[410] It was commanded by Az Zubair ibn-al-Awwam,[411] companion of the Prophet and a kinsman, member of the aristocracy of Mecca and one of the six advisers of Umar. This detachment was followed by others and soon the total number of reinforcements amounted to some 12,000 men.[412] Among the arrivals were many companions of the Prophet and the son of the Caliph Umar himself.[413]

Amr succeeded in crossing the Nile again without being challenged by the Byzantines and joined forces with the other detachments. It is very odd indeed that the imperial forces concentrated in Babylon should do nothing to hinder these river crossings which they could have easily enough done in view of their commanding position overlooking the crossings, and to strike at the scattered Arab forces isolated by the waters of both the rivers and canals. With the superior numbers which they undoubtedly possessed, they could have easily decimated the Arabs piecemeal.[414]

Now commanding some 16,000 men,[415] Amr established his base at Heliopolis on the edge of the desert, as the Arabs customarily did when they faced an uncertain situation.

[410] All historians (Butler, Caetani and so on) agree that the arrival of this detachment occurred on June 6, 640 and this is derived from a Coptic tradition.

[411] Caetani, Annali, IV, 328; Butler, op. cit., p. 226; Becker in C.M.H., II, 350; Diehl, op. cit., p. 546.

[412] Baladhuri, p. 336; Makrizi, op. cit., pp. 116–118; Abu Salih, p. 72.

[413] Butler, op. cit., p. 229.

[414] Caetani, Annali, IV, 259; Butler, op. cit., pp. 226–227; Diehl, op. cit., p. 546.

[415] The number of Amr's forces has raised some controversy. Nikiu (p. 557), Eutychius (p. 1103) and Al-Makine (p. 25) maintain that only 4,000 Arab reinforcements were sent to Amr. The same is stated by Abd el-Hakam. But Baladhuri, Makrizi, Yakut and Al Kindi say that three detachments of 4,000 men each were sent. Yakut in fact (the entry Fostat of his Lexicon) records that when Umar had sent the reinforcements to Amr he wrote him to the effect that if he were defeated, it would not be due to the lack of numbers in his army, signifying that his forces were amply large.

The Byzantines had also assembled some of their forces, but there was discord among the leaders. Cyrus argued that they should come to some agreement with the enemy. Theodore, the Dux of Egypt, did not wish to give battle outside the walls of Babylon, whereas Theodosius (Dux of Arcadia?) and Anastasius (?)[416] wanted to attack the Arabs before the Nile flooded[417] when communications by water would become more difficult.[418]

The Byzantine army of some 10–12,000 men (see Note XV), composed for the most part of lance-carrying foot soldiers and bowmen, finally emerged from the walled city and advanced in the direction of Heliopolis, ten kilometers to the northeast.

Amr had been forewarned of the movements of the imperial troops and carefully laid two traps for them.[419] The engagement was bitterly contested, both armies fighting resolutely to the finish. In the course of the battle and at a prearranged moment a detachment of Arab horse under Kharijah attacked the rear echelons of the Byzantines whereupon the latter began to fall back in disorder. Then Zubair, leading a second detachment of cavalry, struck their flanks. Panic seized the imperial forces which soon fell back in disordered retreat. Very few troops survived. The Arabs reoccupied Umm Dunain (Tendunyas) the garrison of which had fled to the safety of Babylon.[420]

The losses suffered by the two armies are unknown. The battle took place in July 640.[421] The Arabs then advanced on Babylon, but this was only a threatening maneuver since the flooding of the Nile had already begun, thus precluding a close blockade of the citadel.

4.

Some time later, the Byzantines were prepared to negotiate with the Arabs, but when this occurred is not known since the sources

[416] According to Butler, op. cit., p. 230, he led the cavalry regiment.
[417] The Nile begins to flood in July or beginning August.
[418] John of Nikiu, p. 557.
[419] Ibid.
[420] Ibid., p. 558.
[421] Becker, II, 350; Caetani, IV, 334; Butler, op. cit., 235; Wiet, op. cit., p. 5; Hitti, op. cit., p. 161.

are not only vague but conflicting, and often the information supplied by them is not logical (see Note XVI).

As has already been pointed out, Cyrus preferred negotiations to military confrontation. If it is true that Cyrus began talks at that time, this would have been after the defeat of Heliopolis when a large part of the Byzantine army had been destroyed, the morale had fallen and panic was pretty universal. Makrizi records that Cyrus sent an embassy to Amr asking for the terms of surrender. The embassy was led by the Bishop of Babylon.[422]

Most historians agree that negotiations were opened after September 640. It is recorded that Cyrus agreed to pay a tribute of 200,000 gold solidi yearly provided that the pact received the Emperor's approval. Cyrus hurriedly despatched a copy of the terms to Constantinople, but Heraclius, according to all the sources, refused to ratify the agreement. Instead, he sent the cubicularius[423] Marianus as commander with orders to fight the Arabs. Nicephorus maintains that Heraclius summoned Cyrus to the capital and this is substantiated by Theophanes.

Cyrus arrived in the Byzantine capital in November 640 at the latest. Heraclius accused him of betraying the interests of the Empire and giving up the gold of Egypt to the Arabs. Nicephorus relates that the accusation was made in person by the Emperor before a large gathering of the "Demus." In his defense, Cyrus maintained that he was not giving the Saracens monies from the taxes intended for the Emperor but from other sources, and that the tribute to the Arabs would be paid in the form of goods and merchandise, moreover, that others had established the precedent(?). The enraged Heraclius accused him of being a "pagan and enemy of God" and threatened to put him to death. According to Nicephorus, Heraclius turned him over finally to the Eparch of Constantinople to subject him to torture. But the entire incident as described by Nicephorus does not appear to be factual. It is difficult to believe that a clergyman of such exalted rank would be given up to torture especially at the orders of an exceptionally pious Emperor. This incident becomes even more difficult to accept when bearing in mind that Heraclius

[422] As far as I am aware, Babylon is nowhere mentioned as the seat of a bishopric.

[423] The cubiculum is the bedchamber of the emperor. A cubicularius is the guardian of the bedchamber, hence a senior palace official.

was very ill at the time and was soon to succumb to his ailment.

At all events, Cyrus was sent into exile and the agreement, if it did in fact take place, since I am not absolutely convinced of this, was not ratified by Heraclius. According to Nicephorus (p. 25), Marianus fell in battle, but in which battle he does not specify.

It is maintained that about this time an agreement was reached between the Arabs and the Copts. Concerning this matter, the sources are very confusing. John Nikiu records that a certain eparch by name George[424] collaborated with Amr. The Arab chroniclers write that the Copts opened negotiations with the Arabs. The former requested that the terms offered to Cyrus also apply to them, regardless of whether they were rejected by the Byzantines. The Arabs accepted the conditions and after the pact that emerged, the Copts began to collaborate with the Arabs overtly.[425]

After careful examination of the sources, I cannot reach any sort of conclusion as to the veracity of this tradition. One thing is certain, however, that after the agreement the support given by the Copts continued to grow. It is recorded in fact that Benjamin, Patriarch of the Coptic Church, had issued a circular calling upon his flock to support the Arabs openly.[426]

5.

Babylon held out for some time. The blockade and siege had begun after the recession of the Nile waters, hence in September 640. In this interrim, negotiations alternated with battles. The garrison remaining after the defeat of Heliopolis was rather small[427] although Butler argues that it amounted to 5–6,000 men.[428] The commander was, according to Arabic sources, a certain Al-Araf, probably George. Two dates exist for the capitulation of Babylon,

[424] John Nikiu, p. 559. Lane-Pool, History of Egypt, p. 6, states that El-Mukawkis was head of the Copts and father of George. But Milne, History of Egypt, p. 225, regards George as the Eparch of Augustamnian Egypt.
[425] Negotiations were started during the siege of Babylon, Eutychius, p. 1104; Makrizi, ed. Casanova, p. 120. Caetani, Annali, IV, 169; Lane-Pool, op. cit., p. 8.
[426] Makrizi, History, ed. Blochet, p. 115; Hitti, op. cit., p. 165.
[427] Caetani, Annali, IV, 338.
[428] Butler, op. cit., p. 251.

one from Arabic sources[429] maintaining that it fell on a Friday, the first of the month of Moharrem, in the 20th year of the Hegira,[430] consequently the 21st of December 640. The other derives from John Nikiu who relates that after an attack and the capture of a section of the walls by Zubair, the garrison surrendered on the day after the Resurrection (April 9, 641).[431]

John is a contemporary historian whereas the Arabic sources are dated much later and it is natural that with the passage of time a corruption of the dating had occurred. But the text of John is very fragmented and difficult to decipher.

After examining the entire problem, I have concluded that the city of Babylon (Misr) was conquered or surrendered on December 21, 640, whereas the citadel continued to hold out until April 641. This view is based on the fact that Amr could continue the siege with a small detachment of his army while with the larger part of his forces he began operations throughout Upper and Lower Egypt. If the entire city was to be blockaded and beleaguered and not only the citadel, it would not have been possible to withdraw the largest part of the Arab army for far-off campaigns.

On April 6, 641, a Friday, Zubair succeeded in scaling the walls at night and occuping a part of the citadel. The garrison commander realized that further resistance was impossible and he immediately began discussions for the surrender of the citadel together with all the military equipment and engines that were still usable on April 9, 641.[432]

The siege of the city and the citadel had lasted seven months all told.[433]

While the citadel of Babylon was being besieged, Amr sent detachments of his army into Upper and Lower Egypt.

[429] Makrizi, op. cit., p. 133; Elie Bar Sinaya; Abu Salih, pp. 71–75.

[430] Brooks, The Relations between the Empire and Egypt, etc. He notes that the 1st of Moharrem was not a Friday, but a Thursday. According to Al-Makine (p. 25), "Egypt" was conquered on this day.

[431] John Nikiu, pp. 566, 567. This date is accepted by Caetani, op. cit., IV, 168; Butler, op. cit., p. 275; Becker, C.M.H., II, 350; Hitti, op. cit., p. 162; Wellhausen, Skizzen usw., p. 92; and Wiet, Precis etc., II, 110.

[432] John Nikiu, p. 567.

[433] Eutychius, p. 1103; Makrizi, ed. Casanova, p. 133; Al-Kindi, op. cit.; Suyuti, ed. Jarrett, p. 72.

One detachment under Kharijah[434] was despatched to Fayum. The commander Domentianus quickly abandoned his position and fled to the city of Nikiu.[435] Makrizi records that all of Fayum was occupied without opposition.[436]

Another detachment was directed against Antinoe.[437] Despite the animosity which they had for the Greeks, the inhabitants decided to resist. But it seems that the Dux John was not militarily inclined. He soon abandoned the fortress with the garrison carrying the taxes which he had collected.[438] The city of Antinoe together with the whole of Upper Egypt was soon occupied by the Arab conquerors.[439]

In the meantime, other detachments consisting of Arabs, Egyptian collaborators and converts to Islam, advanced along the length of the eastern bank of the Nile to Semnud.[440] The local garrison refused to fight,[441] but finally the two generals who had been sent by the Dux Theodore with regiments of the regular army succeeded in defeating the Arabs and forcing them to withdraw to Athrib.[442]

A wave of panic swept the country after the fall of Heliopolis. As John Nikiu so succinctly put it, all began to flee, abandoning their possessions and flocking to Alexandria. Unprecedented chaos had taken hold of Egypt. Bands of Egyptians began to run amok through the countryside, pillaging, killing and destroying all before them. Nikiu records that Menas, leader of the Green faction, and Cosmas, head of the Blues,[443] made continuous raids in the region of Babylon in support of the Arabs.[444] The boats that attempted to break the blockade of the enemy to carry supplies to the beleaguered

[434] Baladhuri, p. 341.
[435] John Nikiu, p. 559.
[436] Ibid.
[437] Ancient city on the Nile which no longer exists. It was the capital city of the Ducate of the Thebaid.
[438] John Nikiu, pp. 562, 563.
[439] Baladhuri, p. 342; Amélineau, La conquête de l'Égypte etc.
[440] City in the Delta of the Nile situated on the western bank of the branch of Damietta. In ancient times it was known as Sebenytus. The city lay probably on both banks of the river.
[441] John Nikiu, p. 560.
[442] Ibid, p. 561; Butler, op. cit., p. 267.
[443] Butler, op. cit., p. 265, maintains that these were the clans that existed at Fayum which formed bands of freebooters after its occupation by the Arabs.
[444] John Nikiu, p. 568.

city were continually exposed to attacks by these freebooting bands.

The garrison of Babylon escaped to Nikiu by boat.[445] This city was the initial target of Amr.

The Egyptians now openly supported the Arabs.[446] Some embraced Islam and joined the ranks of Amr's army. With the reinforcements he had received and the natives that enlisted in his forces, Amr possessed an army of some 20,000 men.[447] He himself led a detachment of cavalry on the western side of the westernmost arm of the Nile. When Domentianus, the commander of Nikiu, learned that the Arabs were approaching, he hastened to abandon the city. His army was scattered and one section put up a brief resistance but was slain by the enemy who soon after entered the undefended city. Its inhabitants were put to the sword by the Arabs who plundered the entire area around. Nikiu fell on May 13, 641.[448]

Amr advanced northward giving small battles and engagements on the way with remnants of the Byzantine army that resisted heroically[449] despite the ever-present treachery and the cowardice of some commanders. They managed finally to slow down Amr's advance. Encounters occurred at Tarnut (modern Terraneh), Kom Sharik and elsewhere. According to Nikiu the imperial forces fought under the command of the Dux Theodore, but according to Severus,[450] under the general Marianus.

With the advance of the Arabs, Lower Egypt was split into two camps, those who wished to remain loyal to the Dux Theodore, and others who wanted to unite with the Arabs.[451] Clashes between Egyptians, looting and burning of cities were now everyday occurrences.[452]

[445] Nikiu was a strongly fortified city of the Ducate of Egypt on the westernmost arm of the Nile. In ancient times it was known as Paschati or Prosopis. Amélineau (Géographie etc., p. 283) believes it to be the modern village of Ibschady.

[446] Eutychius, p. 1105; Makrizi, ed. Bouriant, p. 467.

[447] Butler, op. cit., p. 291.

[448] John Nikiu, p. 569; Butler, op. cit., p. 285; Caetani, Annali, IV, 343. Wellhausen, Skizzen usw., p. 90, rightly corrects the Indiction but errs in saying that the date May 13, 641 was a Saturday.

[449] Eutychius, p. 1106; Butler, op. cit., p. 288; Wiet, Précis etc., II, 111.

[450] Sevére d'Eschmounein. p. 230/494; Nicephorus, p. 25.

[451] John Nikiu, pp. 569, 570.

[452] Butler, op. cit., p. 285. These clashes most probably were caused by the hatred of the Egyptian Copts for the Egyptian Melkites or imperialists.

A long and hard-fought battle between the Byzantines and Arabs took place at Kariun[453] which, according to Arab sources,[454] lasted for ten days. Initially the outcome hung in the balance and the Arabs came near to suffering a rout, but their superior numbers and their greater military prowess forced the imperial troops to withdraw, but in complete order, to Alexandria.[455] The Arabs thus occupied the city and the citadel of Kariun.[456]

Al-Kindi and Makrizi write that Amr's advance on Alexandria began in May of 641.

As has been pointed out in Volume I, Alexandria was extremely well fortified, and as long as it possessed a strong and determined garrison and its communications by sea were kept open, the city could be deemed well-nigh impregnable.

Amr believed that with the chaotic situation and the panic that had swept across the country, he would be able by a sudden attack capture the city. He advanced with great haste against the city, but the stone-throwing engines of Alexandria launched a steady shower of stones against the attackers who were forced to retreat.[457] Amr had reached the outskirts of Alexandria in the middle or the end of July 641[458] with an army estimated to number about 12 to 15,000 men (see Note XVII).

Amr soon realized that the conquest of Alexandria was not an easy venture, nor could he lay siege to the city since the Arabs, as has been continually pointed out, were totally unfamiliar with the techniques of siege warfare. In view of this, he established to the east of the city a strong well-protected camp. His aim was to cut all land communications with the city.

Amr decided to proceed with the conquest of Lower Egypt. With his forces he moved in any easterly direction razing, slaughtering

But because the two factions, the Greens and the Blues (see Volume I), were perpetually at loggerheads, the division and the rebellions may have also come from them.

[453] Kariun or Keriun was a garrison town some 40 kilometers east of Alexandria and one of the fortresses that covered the capital city of Egypt.

[454] Baladhuri, p. 346. Makrizi is the main source stating that the battle lasted for 10 days (ed. Bouriant, p. 467).

[455] John Nikiu, p. 570; Eutychius, p. 1106.

[456] Butler, op. cit., p. 291; Amélineau, op. cit.; Wiet, L'Égypte etc., p. 6.

[457] John Nikiu, p. 570; Amélineau, op. cit.; Lane-Pool, op. cit., p. 10.

[458] Caetani, Annali, IV, 343; Butler, op. cit., p. 295; Wiet, op. cit., p. 6.

and pillaging the towns and the countryside. Cities that were fortified and possessed a determined garrison defended themselves well and repulsed the attacks. Towards the end of July 641, he reached Damietta the garrison of which forced him to withdraw. Finding himself faced with the new flooding of the Nile, Amr was compelled to withdraw to Misr where he established his headquarters.

Arab and other chroniclers maintain that the siege of Alexandria lasted for several months,[459] and according to Baladhuri's version the city was captured by assault. But I believe that most chroniclers tend to confuse the first capture of Alexandria and its second occupation a few years later. During the period covered by the present volume, Alexandria yielded after a many months' siege, irrespective of whether we cannot strictly speak of it as a siege, since an actual beleaguerment did not take place.

6.

The unsettled situation in Byzantium and the consecutive changes of emperors due to death had brought about throughout the Empire a wave of despondency and fear among its inhabitants, especially in Egypt. The demise of Heraclius, the soldier monarch, and the quarrels between his son Constantine and Martina were fatal blows for the Empire, particularly at a time so extremely critical for Byzantium.

Heraclius had begun to collect an army and fleet to reinforce the defenses of Egypt.

Some difficulties arise for the scholar concerning the return of Cyrus and the surrender of Egypt. Theophanes and the Syrian chroniclers give an identical version (see Note XVIII) whereas the contemporary John Nikiu and Nicephorus present the situation in altogether different manner. I am convinced that Theophanes and the Syrian chroniclers are incorrect. Regardless of the fact that it was difficult for Heraclius to accept a truce with the Arabs, sufficient time had not elapsed between the recall from Alexandria, Cyrus's exile and the death of Heraclius. The Emperor at all events died

[459] Baladhuri reports a 3 months' siege. Tabari writes a siege of 5 months whereas Makrizi gives 2 versions, one of 3 and another of 6 months. Eutychius maintains that Alexandria was beleaguered for 14 months and Al-Makine supports this contention.

before the citadel of Babylon had fallen and consequently before the situation in Egypt had deteriorated further.

John Nikiu[460] relates that Constantine, son of Heraclius, summoned Theodore to Constantinople and left in charge in Alexandria Anastasius, the Augustalius of Egypt,[461] and the general Domentianus. He had promised Theodore that he would the next summer send a large army to Egypt, but when the fleet was nearly ready to sail, Constantine died.

Cyrus was recalled from exile before Constantine II died. In all likelihood, Martina, who reigned for her son Heraclius II, following discussions she had with Cyrus and a report on the situation that Theodore had given her, decided to send Cyrus back to Egypt.[462] He was given instructions to come to terms with the Arabs, apparently with the aim of the latter's complete withdrawal from Egypt, and to reorganize the administration in that country.[463] It is my belief that this odd phrase of John Nikiu suggests the organization of Egypt as an Exarchate or Theme, provided of course that the Arabs would withdraw from the country. But this would indicate that in no event whatsoever had Cyrus received instructions to surrender Egypt to the Arabs. The general Constantine, bearing the title "Magister Militum", departed with Cyrus for the threatened province.

Cyrus stopped over in Rhodes where he reached an understanding with Theodore who soon after departed for Alexandria because in the meantime serious disturbances were breaking out in Egypt. The army being prepared for despatch to Egypt was being enfeebled and demoralized by the actions of the general Valentinus (See Chapter X). In view of the delicate situation, Cyrus with general Constantine, the army and the fleet, hastened their departure for Alexandria.

Alexandria had become a veritable battlefield. Domentianus had

[460] John Nikiu (p. 566) records that the Emperor recalled Anastasius and left Theodore in command. Rightly does Butler point out that Nikiu himself on page 573 reports Theodore in Rhodes with Cyrus, and Anastasius in Alexandria and that consequently this is an error of the translator (see p. 303, fn. 3). Charles corrects the text in his edition of Nikiu.

[461] Zotenberg on p. 556, fn. 1, writes that Anastasius was the Augustalius of Egypt.

[462] John Nikiu, p. 572; Nicephorus, p. 29.

[463] John Nikiu, ibid.

inducted many Blues into the militia and attacked the Greens, of whom the general Menas (?) was leader. When the Eparch of Arcadia Philiades had fled to Alexandria, Domentianus wanted to arrest him. But the former was supported by Menas. Clashes and violent incidents between the Blues and the Greens occurred daily in the streets of the city. As John Nikiu reports, "Egypt became the prey of Satan."[464] The clashes were in all probability motivated by religious differences and most of all to the hatred of the Coptic populace for the Byzantines.[465]

When Theodore reached Alexandria he succeeded in restoring order after considerable difficulty. He dismissed Domentianus and took all measures needed to prevent the recurrence of the riots.

Cyrus arrived in Alexandria on the 14th September 641, Holy Cross day.[466] The reception awaiting him was truly remarkable, for the entire population sped to welcome him with rejoicing and tears.[467] When Cyrus proceeded to the Caesarium[468] all the streets had been laid out with carpets and the crowds that greeted him huge. For the moment at least, the Egyptians had forgotten that Cyrus was looked upon in their eyes as an antichrist because of the persecutions he had instigated against the Coptic Monophysites. They saw in him a harbinger of peace.

Cyrus was disposed to reaching an agreement with the Arabs for peace at any price, and became still more determined in the face of the new internal upheavals that faced the country. Anarchy, cowardice, and unwillingness to fight were rampant among the populace of Alexandria. In view of the discouraging situation, he

[464] John Nikiu, pp. 570, 571; Butler, op. cit., 310–314; Amélineau, op. cit., Bréhier, Vie et mort etc., p. 57; Milne, op. cit., p. 116.

[465] John Nikiu, p. 572.

[466] Ibid., p. 574; Caetani, Annali, V, 345; Butler, op. cit., p. 309; Bréhier, Histoire de l'Église, V, 153. Zotenberg, p. 574, fn. 1, supports the date September 17. In his study on the Chronology of the Conquest of Egypt etc., he argues that Cyrus arrived in Alexandria before Easter 641. This view is rejected at great length by Butler in the Appendix D (p. 537 ff.) of his book. I agree entirely with the views of Butler. Wellhausen, op. cit., p. 90, maintains that the Augustalius Theodore arrived in Alexandria on the 14th of September.

[467] John Nikiu, p. 574.

[468] The Caesarium was a palace built by Cleopatra for her son by Julius Caesar, who was known as Caesarion. Constantine the Great converted the palace to a large Christian church. See Amélineau, La Géographie etc., pp. 28,38.

realized that it would be impossible to continue resisting the enemy and so decided to reach the best possible agreement under the circumstances. Some[469] maintain that he reached such a decision only because he feared that a surprise assault on the part of the Arabs would cause much destruction. But this cannot be so. Alexandria was an extremely well protected city and a surprise attack was out of the question. This was proven to be the case when Amr, after the battle of Kariun, at a time when the morale of the imperial troops was at a low ebb, launched an attack on the city which was easily repulsed.

I do not give much credence to the narrative of Theophanes and several Syrian sources (see Note XIX) which in any case does not stand the test of scholarship. According to Nikiu,[470] after reaching an understanding with Amr, Cyrus visited Babylon where the Arab leader's headquarters were located, and following negotiations agreed to the terms for surrendering Egypt to him.

On the basis of John of Nikiu's narrative, it was agreed that:

1. The inhabitants, excepting the aged and the children, would pay an annual tax of 2 dinaria per person.
2. There would be a truce for 11 months.
3. The Arabs would cease all hostile acts during the truce.
4. The garrison of Alexandria and the entire Byzantine army would vacate Egypt with all their possessions.
5. No new imperial army would be sent to Alexandria during the period of truce.
6. The Muslems would respect the Christian Churches and would not interfere in matters concerning the Christians.
7. The Jews would remain in Alexandria.

and

8. 150 officers and 50 citizens would be given as hostages for the fulfillment of the terms of the treaty.

The treaty was signed at Babylon[471] on the 28th of Djul-Kade, in the 20th year of the Hegira, or November 28, 641.

When Cyrus returned to Alexandria he hastened to make known

[469] Caetani, Annali, IV, 345.

[470] John Nikiu, p. 575.

[471] Dölger, Regesten, I. No. 220; Butler, op. cit., p. 320; Caetani, op. cit., IV, 345; Bréhier, Histoire de l'Église, V, 153; Becker, C.M.H., II, 351.

the terms of the treaty to Theodore, the Augustalius, and Constantine, the commander, both of whom he delegated to return to Constantinople to persuade Heraclius II[472] to approve the agreement.

As soon as the terms of the treaty had become known in Alexandria, a riotous outburst against Cyrus occurred in which he was nearly stoned to death by the enraged crowds. But by repeated meetings, speeches and most of all his power to tame the enraged Greeks of the city, he finally convinced them that he had done all in his power to preserve them.[473]

According to the Arabic tradition, as it has survived in the versions of Abd al-Hakam[474] and Ibd Khaldoun, the first payment of the tribute monies was made by Cyrus himself[475] on December 10, 641. This date is treated by the Arabs as the date of the conquest of Egypt.[476]

But Cyrus was very disturbed by the manner in which the treaty was implemented. The Arabs behaved barbarously.[477] They had instituted also a land tax which they exacted with extreme cruelty. Cyrus' depression was further aggravated when he learned of the fall of Martina and Heraclius II with whom he was closely associated. He was also confronted by the anger of palace circles in Constantinople for the manner in which he so readily surrendered Egypt to the Arabs. On Saturday, the Resurrection of Lazarus in the church calendar, Cyrus suffered an attack of dysentery and on Easter Thursday, March 21, 642, died as a result (see Note XX). And, as one can expect, there exists also a legend about the suicide of Cyrus.[478]

[472] John Nikiu, p. 576; Butler, op. cit., p. 330. For the agreement to be sent for ratification by Heraclius II would indicate that in November 641 he was still reigning, or that the news of his deposition had not yet reached Alexandria.

[473] John Nikiu, p. 576.

[474] Abd al-Hakam records that the Copts were very displeased by the Cyrus-Amr agreement. By the treaty between Amr and Mucaci (?), leader of the Copts, the Arabs had undertaken the obligation of slaying all the Greeks. The new agreement therefore invalidated the treaty. But we can be pretty sure that these are all figments of the imagination.

[475] This is also recorded in the title of the 120th chapter of the Chronicle of John of Nikiu. But there is no reference in the text of the chronicle to the incident.

[476] Butler, op. cit., p. 333.

[477] John Nikiu, p. 579.

[478] Sévere d'El Eschmounein (pp. 231/495) writes that Cyrus took his own

The Augustalius Theodore appointed the deacon Peter as the new Patriarch of Alexandria in July 642. The date, however, is disputed by Grumel (see Note XXI).

Amr sent detachments to occupy the cities of Lower Egypt. In the Spring of 642 a body of Arab and Egyptian troops left Kariun in an easterly direction. The various cities surrendered by treaty agreements one after the other. Some refused to accept the treaties and resisted, but soon the entire Delta area had submitted to the invader.

The citizens of Alexandria, especially the wealthier classes, began a mass exodus, abandoning their homes and possessions to escape.

When Amr observed that the treaty was being faithfully implemented by the Byzantines, he released the hostages. The imperial army under Constantine and the administration under Theodore evacuated the city on September 17, 642,[479] and sailed to Rhodes. It is recorded that the last evacuation was carried out by 100 large ships.[480]

At the head of his troops, victorious Amr entered Alexandria on September 29. In the early stages, Amr adhered to the terms of the surrender and ruled peacefully. But in time, he began to impose increases in the taxes and the populace suffered new burdens.[481] Amr has been accused of burning the famous and remarkable Library of Alexandria. But this is completely at variance with the facts (see Note XXII).

Cyrus is considered as mainly responsible for the surrender of Egypt to the Arabs.[482] Indubitably his general attitude favoring

life because he feared that Amr would slay him. This highly improbable story has been accepted by some historians. But what did Cyrus fear most? Death. And what did he do? Take his own life. In other words, he brought about the very thing he feared most.

[479] John Nikiu, p. 583, but not for the year. The correct year 642 is accepted by Brooks, op. cit.; Butler, op. cit., p. 366; Becker, C.M.H., II, 351; Wellhausen, Skizzen usw.; Bell, op. cit.; Hitti, op. cit., p. 164; Lane-Pool, op. cit., p. 11; and Milne, op. cit. Ostrogorsky, A History etc., p. 103, accepts the date September 12, 642, but this is peculiar since no other source records such a date. Also, Bréhier, op. cit., V, 373, says November 29, 642. On the other hand, Zotenberg, fn. 1, p. 575, maintains the year 643, which date is accepted by Amélineau and Lambros.

[480] Butler, op. cit., p. 366, fn. 3.

[481] John Nikiu, p. 584; Theophanes, p. 338.

[482] Butler, op. cit., pp. 334–336.

peace helped much to this end. As was pointed out in the early part of this chapter, the weak administrative organization of the country was one of the basic factors contributing to its fall. No person was available who could unite all the scattered imperial forces in the province to face the situation dynamically and effectively. Although the number of Arab invaders was small in the early phases, the Byzantines somehow managed in all their battles to be numerically weaker than the enemy. Another important factor was the impotence and cowardice of the officer corps. At all events, the most unjustifiable action was the surrender of Alexandria. As has been repeatedly pointed out, the city possessed unusually strong fortifications. After the arrival of reinforcements under the general Constantine, the dangers it ran were negligible. With the city in their possession, and with absolute control of the sea which the Byzantines then enjoyed, it is very probable that they could have reconquered Egypt a few years later. Its surrender without battle was in effect nothing short of treason.

7.

Soon after the surrender of Alexandria,[483] Amr at the head of a corps of horsemen[484] advanced in the direction of the Pentapolis.[485] The expedition probably took place before the beginning of the rains which could have impeded the advance over sandy areas.[486] There is a difference of opinion amongst the Arab chroniclers concerning the date of the invasion of the Pentapolis region.[487] Since Amr entered

[483] John Nikiu, ed. Zotenberg, p. 578; Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, p. 352; Brooks, B.Z., IV/1895; Caetani, Annali, IV, 53.

[484] Abd al-Hakam, ed. Gateau.

[485] In the northern part of the Cyrenaic peninsula. Pentapolis consisted of a federation of five cities whence the name. It was founded by the Ptolemies. Initially the cities included Cyrene, Arsinoe, Berenice, Apollonia and Ptolemais. According to El-Bekri (ed. de Slane), p. 14, fn. 1, the cities were Cyrene, Barca (Ptolemais), Teucheira (Arsinoe), Berenice and Apollonia.

[486] Goodchild, Byzantines, Berbers etc.

[487] Bekri (p. 14), Abd-al-Hakam, Noweiri (see also de Slane in J. Asiatique 1844, p. 331 ff.), Yaqut, Ibn Khaldoun and Élie Bar Sinaya, say the incursion took place in the 21st year of the Hegira (December 10, 641–November 29, 642). Amari, Storia etc., I, 109. According to Athir, III, 19 and Makrizi, ed. Casanova, the raid took place in the 22nd year of the Hegira (Nov. 30, 642-November 18, 643). Butler, op. cit., p. 428; Becker, C.M.H., II, 366;

Alexandria on September 29, 642, the incursion must have occurred towards the end of the Autumn of 642, and the arrival in the Pentapolis area in November/December of that year. This coincides with the close of the 21st year of the Hegira and the opening of the 22nd. Many Egyptian Copts were now serving in the forces of Amr (John Nikiu). The incursion was made with no preconceived war plan and no intention of permanent occupation. It was another straightforward razzia. Amr was anxious to collect the loot of this razzia as soon as possible and for this reason gave liberal terms to the inhabitants of the region whom he had no intention of governing and who for the greater part were Monophysitic.[488]

Barca (Ptolemais) surrendered with no show of resistance and agreed to pay a tribute of 13,000 gold solidi yearly. The commander of the area which the sources name as a certain Abulianus,[489] probably Apollonius, with his meager forces returned to the well fortified city of Teucheira (Arsinoe).[490] There were in the Pentapolis region 5 arithmoi (battalions), each comprising 300–500 men, and several hundred garrison troops. These forces were responsible for repelling the invaders and for the defense of the cities.[491] Amr sent Okba ben-Nafi with a force of horsemen further to the West to continue the razzia.[492] Teucheira and many other cities in the region remained in the hands of the Byzantines.

Concerning the dating of the invasion and the fall of Tripoli there is considerable doubt in the sources (see Note XXIII). Amr advanced once again against Pentapolis in the Autumn of the 23rd year of the Hegira (644). The safety of Egypt would be insecure as numerous fortified cities still remained in the hands of the Byzantines. Amr was accompanied by the Egyptian Dux Sanutius who had gone over to the Arabs and many Egyptians served in his army. He

Caudel, Les Premières Invasions etc., pp. 40–43; Julien, Histoire etc., II, 13; Moss, La Naissance etc., p. 196. In view of the small discrepancy in the various dates, I would conclude that the invasion occurred in October and the early part of November 642 and continued into the following year.

[488] Caudel, op. cit., p. 44.

[489] John Nikiu, p. 578; Maspéro, Organisation Militaire etc., p. 24, fn. 5., refers to him as Flabianus; Goodchild, op. cit.

[490] John Nikiu, p. 578. Teucheira, as has been pointed out (fn. 485) was formerly known as Arsinoe; Goodchild, op. cit.

[491] Maspéro, op. cit., pp. 147, 148.

[492] Kairouani, p. 36; Goodchild, op. cit.

succeeded in taking Tripoli by assault after a siege of one month,[493] massacred part of the population and looted the city and the outlying region. He also seized and looted other cities of Tripolitania. It is recorded that Teucheira was occupied in 645,[494] and perhaps therein lies the tradition saying that the conquest of Pentapolis occurred during the rule of the Caliph Uthman.[495]

According to Arabic tradition,[496] Amr wished to continue the razzia farther in the West, but Umar did not give him the permission. Following this, Amr returned with his army to Egypt. All the expeditions were in effect plundering raids and at the same time were aimed at destroying the imperial forces that were situated to the west of Egypt. There was no intention or indication of permanent occupation and settlement of these territories.[497] On this point John of Nikiu is emphatic.[498]

[493] Abd-al-Hakam, Ibn Khaldoun and El-Bekri state that the siege of Tripoli lasted one month. Yaqut mentions 3 months. See also Butler, op. cit., p. 429.

[494] Goodchild, op. cit.

[495] Isidorianae Continuationes.

[496] This version which is not accepted by Caetani, Annali, IV, 697, is recorded by Baladhuri, p. 355 and Abd-al-Hakam, ed. Gateau. At all events, Yakubi, ed. Wiet, writes that Tripoli is the farthest point west conquered during the Caliphate of Umar. But there exists some error in the chronology since Umar died towards the end of 644.

[497] Caetani, Annali IV, 697.

[498] John Nikiu, p. 578.

CHAPTER VI

CAUSES FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE ARABS

The success of the Arab advance was indeed remarkable. No one would have expected it, least of all the Arabs themselves who had set out on a great razzia and found themselves unexpectedly in complete possession of vast areas, masters of the fate of millions of people encompassing a huge empire. To what was this remarkable success due?

In this chapter I shall attempt to give those causes which in my opinion were the underlying factors making possible the irresistible advance forward of a once obscure nation of desert dwellers to the North, the West and the East. But before dwelling on that particular subject at some length, certain general considerations should be pointed out to give us the actual framework within which these specific causes were to come into play.

One of the primary reasons which made possible the Arab success was the fact that two large empires, the two great empires of the time, had lain prostrate and exhausted. The interminable years of warfare between Byzantium and Persia had impoverished both. The losses in wealth and manpower were incalculable. For many years entire provinces had been subjected to devastation and desolation with the inevitable depopulation. Many had died as prisoners or hostages or soldiers. Both empires were on the verge of collapse.[499] And the prostration of the armies of both was astonishing.[500]

The Arabs had entered territories with which they already had some acquaintance, and they were themselves not unknown in those regions. As has been pointed out in other chapters, the Arabs had already extended their influence into Mesopotamia, Syria and Palestine. Large sections of the federation of tribes, for example, of the Quuda containing the Salih, the Kais, Kalb, Tanous tribes

[499] Halphen, Les Barbares, p. 132; Pirenne, Mahomet etc., p. 90.
[500] Bréhier, La Transformation de l'Empire etc.

and so on had already settled in the territory south of the Euphrates and along the length of the frontier areas of Syria up to Egypt. The great majority of these Arabs were Christian.[501] The great Taghlib tribe, Christian for the most part, had migrated from Arabia and established itself in Mesopotamia and the limits of Syria (Palmyra and so on).[502] The equally large tribe of the Iyad had begun to migrate from as early as the 3rd Century to Mesopotamia and certain areas of Syria (Antioch, Emesa, Aleppo, etc.)[503] A major part of the strongest federation of tribes, the Kais-Aylan, had domiciled in Syria, mainly in the sectors of Aleppo, Emesa, Damascus and so forth.[504] Consequently, the new invaders, when entering Byzantine territory, found themselves among kinsmen with whom they not only had close ties[505] but common ancestry. The first wave of invaders and subsequently the first conquerors occupied nearly all Semitic territories or provinces inhabited by Aramaic populations.[506]

For many centuries there existed a certain balance of power between the East and the West. This balance was disturbed first by the conquests of Alexander the Great and then by Rome. When the power of Rome began to wane, Persia emerged as the nucleus of resistance of the East. She was the main opponent of Greco-Roman civilization. After the collapse of Persia, the Arabs took advantage not only of the weakness of Byzantium but especially of this spirit of hostility and reaction against Hellenism and its influence in Asia. The former antagonism and the balance of power which once existed in these areas was reasserted by a new power, the success of this power and its final imposition. Thus, the new force, in the early phase exclusively Arabic, exploited the rise of nationalism in these peoples and their rebellion against anything that smacked of Hellenism which had survived since the invasion of Asia by the Greeks. As Jenkins so aptly writes,[507] when we look upon the East in this epoch, we see that through Islam the ancient balance of power which had formerly existed was reinstated.

[501] Lammens, E.I., II, 729, 730. Ibid., II, 1157, 1158; Graf, Geschischte, usw., pp. 25–27.
[502] Kindermann, E.I., Suppl., p. 238; Lammens, Le Chantre etc.
[503] Schleifer, E.I., II, 601, 602.
[504] Fisher, E.I., II, 692–698.
[505] Butler, The Arab Conquest etc., p. 150; Lewis, Les Arabes etc., p. 51.
[506] Caetani, Annali etc., II, 1107 ff.
[507] Jenkins, Byzantium etc., p. 30.

I.

Most contemporary historians maintain that the remarkable successes of the Arabs was due in large part to their religious fervour. Many indeed depict the Arab as a fanatical warrior brandishing a sword in the one hand and waving the Koran menacingly in the other, whose sole aim was to force all and sundry into the fold of Islam. But such a picture is completely at variance with the actual historical facts.[508]

Those Arabs who had made deep forays into Byzantine and Persian territories were neither fanatics nor Muslem. Initially these joined forces with the Arab Christians, and when the latter embraced the new religion, the new proselytes brought with them to Islam their fanaticism and their religious bigotry. It is indeed not surprising then that the Christian Arabs who were hostile to the established church should when they converted to Islam carry with them this spirit of fanatical hostility.[509]

In the early stages, the Arabs were not vitally concerned with proselytisation and as a matter of fact actually discouraged any attempts to convert. And this is understandable. As it has been pointed out in Chapter III, the Arabs did not set out to impose Islam on the peoples they encountered but to conduct purely marauding expeditions into the imperial domains which, however, thanks to the dissolution of the Byzantine armies, soon became an actual conquest. Upon those peoples whom they conquered they imposed a tax. The Muslim population was free of any imposition except for the compulsory contribution made for the needy and the sick of the Muslim community. In the event the conquered inhabitants embraced Islam they too would cease to pay any taxes. Consequently, this would lead to the loss of the greatest single source of income for the Arab conqueror. And precisely because of this they looked upon any conversion to Islam as a loss to their coffers.[511]

Besides the fact that the Koran expressly forbade Muslems to convert forcibly the peoples of the Sacred Books (i.e. the Scriptures),

[508] Vassiliev, Histoire, I, 275; Moss, La naissance du Moyen age, p. 183.
[509] Caetani, Studi di Storia Orientale, I, 24.
[510] J. W. Barker, Justinian and the Later Roman Empire, p. 243.
[511] Spuler, The Muslim World, I, 26; Moss, op. cit., p. 183; Nomicos, Introduction, p. 168; Duchêsne, l'Église, pp. 421 ff.

the early Arabs did not wish to diminish the numbers of those very inhabitants who were obligated to pay these taxes. The leaders of the Arab world, the first Caliphs, looked upon proselytisation to Islam with much disquiet. This was in fact harmful to the interests of the Muslims who had depended for the greatest part of their income on the taxes derived from the subject peoples.[512]

The army of the Arabs for the most part was not composed of Muslems. When Mohammed had passed from the scene, the number of adherents to Islam in the Arabian peninsula was small indeed. Soon after the death of the Prophet, the Arabs rebelled and refused to pay obeisance to Medina. After much internecine strife in which considerable blood had been shed, they flocked finally to join the troops that initially Abu Bakr and subsequently Umar had assembled for razzias to the West and the North. These troops, understandably, could not have been religious fanatics, and they were assisted in many ways by Arab and semi-Arab tribes many of which had long before been Christianised. Thus the Arabs of the Mesopotamian floodlands who were Nestorian or Monophysites helped those bands of warriors that had invaded Persia by fighting at their side. The Monophysite Arabs of Syria followed much the same course. The Taghlibs, the Benu Tanuk and other tribes of Mesopotamia joined forces with the Arabs.[513] As we have seen in Chapter V, various Arab and semi-Arab tribes had assisted Amr in the conquest of Egypt.

It follows, therefore, that since the armies of the Arabs consisted of Bedouins who as yet were unfamiliar with the teachings of the new religion, of Christian Arabs or nomadic tribes of the desert regions of Syria and Egypt, they could not conceivably have been imbued with a fanatical religious drive.[514]

Moreover, nor has any mention been made of forced conversion to Islam in the treaties that the Arabs drew up with the various cities that had surrendered to them.[515]

When they entered the field as conquerors rather than as rapacious marauders, the Arabs altered their stance completely. No longer

[512] Becker, The Expansion of the Saracens, C.M.H., II, 330.
[513] Zaydan, ed. Margoliouth, I (4), 30, 31; Nau, Un colloque.. p. 16 and fn. p. 37; Ibid., Les Arabes Chretiens, p. 106.
[514] Vassiliev, op. cit., I, 275.
[515] Duchêsne, op. cit., p. 421; Wiet, L'Empire Neo-Byzantine, p. 21.

were they the wild "robbers of the desert" who had come to plunder all before them. In accordance with those policies advocated by the Caliph, their behaviour as conquerors soon became exemplary. They proclaimed throughout that the conquered populations were free to retain their faith, their language and their customs. They were assured of protection of life, property and worship. In return for these guarantees, all that was expected of the inhabitants was payment of the capita and the property taxes which were in any event much smaller than they were accustomed to paying to the rapacious tax collectors of Byzantium.

When finally the Arabs established themselves in the newly-conquered territories, they altered very little of what they had found. Civil servants, for example, retained their positions. The language of the imperial account books remained Greek until as late as the 81st year of the Hegira (A.D. 700)[516]. And the coinage was identical with the Greek.

It is true that the initial organization was based not on the interests of the inhabitants but on the aristocracy of the Arabs, that is, the Arab Muslims at the head of which were the Companions of the Prophet.[517] Since, however, the tax burden of the subject populations was not increased, but on the contrary was smaller than that imposed on them by the previous Byzantine masters, the conquered peoples welcomed the change.

Caetani maintains that the progressive drying up of water sources in Arabia had forced the Semites to migrate to more productive areas, and especially during the 7th Century when they wished to move to wealthier regions in order to survive.[518] This theory may be partially true, but Bousquet[519] is justified in asking why, if the dessication of the soil in the peninsula was gradual, the migration and, above all, the conquest took place by waves of invaders especially from the 7th Century and later. Caetani attempts to explain by general sweeping statement a single phenomenon which in fact had different stages. The drying up of water sources in Arabia forced various Arab tribes to migrate to neighbouring countries. But later, when the Arabs burst forth into the nearby countries,

[516] Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, p. 301.
[517] Lewis, Les Arabes, p. 52; Nomicos, op. cit., p. 166.
[518] Caetani, Studi di Storia etc., I, 368.
[519] Bousquet, Quelques remarques etc.

they encountered fellow countrymen and kinsmen of their own. In other words, dessication of the soil may have been one of the generative causes for the subsequent conquests of the Arabs, but it was by no means the only one.

Despite what Greek chroniclers record,[520] the Arabs did not of a sudden migrate by masses into the newly conquered territories. There was no immediate mass colonisation of these countries because Muslims not subject to taxation could not easily establish themselves there. Later, however, many tribes were being encouraged to colonise these rich and abandoned lands of Syria, Egypt and Mesopotamia.[521] It is reported that the number of Arabs who migrated from the peninsula and found new homes in Syria did not in the first century exceed 200,000.[522]

2.

Another reason accounting for the success of the Arabs was the nature of their weapons and their methods of conducting warfare.

First of all they used the camel which was the most suitable beast for attacks through desert country. The horse was very scarce and was considered an item of luxury in the Arabian peninsula.[523] A country that suffered from such drought could hardly maintain horses whose upkeep was, moreover, prohibitive. Initially, only a small minority could afford to own steeds. Camels were used for transportation of humans and supplies. Those Arabs who possessed horses rode them only at the time of skirmishing or battle. But it is true that in the later stages with their conquests and the abundant supplies of booty the horse became the basic means of conducting warfare.

The principal offensive weapon for thrusting or hurling was the long spear that could be used on horseback as well as from the top of the camel. The wooden staff was of bamboo that came from India and the point was of steel. The great length of the shaft and its stoutness provided the Arabs with a first-class offensive weapon.

[520] Theophanes, p. 338; George the Monk, p. 707; Cedrenus, p. 746.
[521] Yakubi, ed. Wiet, p. 171; Becker, C.M.H., II, 347.
[522] Poliak, L'Arabisation de l'Orient Sémitique.
[523] Caetani, Annali etc., II, 1060.

They used also the long sword. Other weapons included the long arrow and the short spear.

Because of their poverty, the Arabs could not afford heavy breastplate. Some wore small chain mail to protect the chest, while others used for protection the long shield[524] covering almost the entire length of the body. But the main protection was provided by the long garment of thick, heavy and coarse wool which was used much as a top cloak either as a cover or to serve as a breast-plate in the hour of battle.[525]

Their military formation emphasized a unity, usually in the form of related tribes or clans, thus eliminating any dangers of friction or rivalry within the ranks. This encouraged a certain emulation and greater bravery in battle because of the presence of relatives and companions.

The tactics and strategy of the Arabs was closely linked with the desert which they used for their communications and movement, whether on the offensive or defensive. Rapid movement through desert country, thanks to the camel, provided them with the means for surprise attack and at the same time a certain security. Whenever the Arabs were confronted by a threatening foe or a difficult situation, they would inevitably concentrate their armies on the edge of the desert. Khalid reached Syria by the desert route, and the Arab contingents were assembled on the limits of the Syrian desert before they launched their attack on the imperial troops. When the Byzantine troops of Theodore the Sakellarius and Vaanes advanced southwards, the Arabs again concentrated on the edge of the desert. In Egypt, Amr always moved along the boundaries of the desert areas before giving battle at Heliopolis.

The Arabs also selected their battlefield, preferably desert country, in which to engage the imperial forces and in which the military tactics of the Byzantines could not effectively be applied.

It was their custom, when advancing in battle formation, to maintain a rear guard that would gather the stragglers and those who were not overly anxious to fight and force them into the battle line. Such a role was played by the womenfolk of the Arabs at Yarmuk.

[524] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Administrando Imperio, Ch. XV, I, 78.
[525] Risler, La Civilisation Arabe, p. 37.

In most of their battles and skirmishes in Palestine, in Syria and Egypt, the only exception being at Yarmuk, the Arabs outnumbered by far their Byzantine opponents. In the clashes of southern Palestine, they had an advantage of 3 to one. At Adjnadayn they were twice the number of their foes. At Fihl they were thrice and at Pelusium five times the number of their enemies. The same was true at Bilbeis where the imperial forces amounted to a quarter of the Arab army, and at Heliopolis where they were one and a half as large as the Byzantine contingent. When at Emesa they were faced by superior numbers, they were defeated. Immediately before the great battle of Yarmuk when they realized that the imperial forces outnumbered their own, they rapidly maneuvered their troops towards the desert area. Only at Yarmuk did the Byzantines outnumber the Arabs, but dissension among the officers and the fateful hot wind that blew off the desert proved disastrous for the imperial army.

The consistent numerical superiority of the Arabs in the battlefield was one of the chief factors contributing to their victories.

Moreover, the weapons they handled and the military tactics they used were other decisive factors which made for their remarkable success in war.

3.

Another important reason accounting for the success of the Arabs was the complete indifference shown by the Byzantines in the early stages of the Arab incursions.

To the Byzantines the Arab problem was something of an extraordinary nature. It was purely a frontier problem that rarely occupied the attention of the central imperial administration. Oftentimes various Arab tribes would enter Byzantine territory for plunder. These raids Byzantium confronted only with policing forces or local militia.[526] Even latterly, in 631 (see Chapter XXI, Volume I), the local militia of southeastern Palestine had routed one such detachment of raiders.

To defend the frontier regions from the raiding parties, the Byzantines normally preferred to use other Arabs, those who had

[526] Finlay, A History of Greece, I, 359, Gaudefroy-Demombynes, Le Monde Musulman, p. 146; Barker, Justinian etc., p. 244.

been settled specially by the imperial government in the border areas ranging round the limits of the desert. The tribes of Ghassan had been established in these areas. There were also the Khudah who were Christianised and controlled many oases and springs between the Syrian frontier and Medina. The latter were much influenced by the Ghassanides.[527] These tribes the Byzantines used against the Arabs.

The short-sighted policy of Byzantium and the discontinuance of the yearly subsidies on account of the drastic economies practiced by the imperial administration had roused the hostility of these frontier Arabs.

It is certain that both the Byzantine authorities and the Persian lacked appropriate intelligence of the basic changes that had taken place in the Arabian peninsula.[528] It was not so much the new religion which had been partially imposed, as the general upheavals and the militant spirit that had taken hold of the Arabs during the internecine struggles of the secessionist movements. Moreover, the domination by Medina and the ensuing prohibition of the razzia within the peninsula compelled the leaders to look further afield, beyond the frontier, for fresh areas of activity. It was precisely this new development that had escaped the knowledge of the two powers preoccupied for years with warring upon each other.

Undoubtedly Heraclius and Byzantium had given very little thought to the Arab menace, nor could they have believed that any danger to the Empire threatened from those disdainfully known as the "robbers of the desert."[529] Preoccupied with great cares of state, particularly in the religious and economic sectors, Heraclius was not disturbed in the least by the first reports of an Arab invasion. Such incursions were commonplace and the Emperor could not take them seriously. Presumably he was confident that the local militia was in a position to face the raiders, or that after the customary looting and devastation, the invaders would withdraw as they normally did.[530] Furthermore, who would fear the Bedouins of the

[527] Lammens, La Mecque etc., p. 356.
[528] Amantos, History etc., I, 317; Gaudefroy-Demombynes, op. cit., p. 146; Zakythinos, Byzantium etc., p. 88.
[529] Dawson, Le Moyen Age etc., p. 156; Lopez, La naissance de l'Europe, p. 82.
[530] Finlay, op. cit., I, 359; Gelzer, Short History of Byzantium; Moss, La Naissance du Moyen Age, p. 192; Caetani, Annali etc., II, 1051.

Hedjaz, divided amongst themselves and perpetually at loggerheads one with the other?

Following the destruction of the small forces of the Patricius Sergius, Heraclius appears to have concerned himself with the problem, but again he treated the invasion as yet another marauding incursion, as in fact it was, but of greater breadth and intensity. He assembled the local militia, civil guards and possibly a small force of regular imperial troops that were available in Syria, to confront the enemy. It should be borne in mind that the Arabs were still conducting razzias and the Byzantines treated them as robbers. The Arabs did not come as conquerors, nor did Byzantium believe that it was in the least threatened.

The defeats suffered at Adjnadayn and Fihl, and the siege and capture of Damascus altered the entire picture. The Arabs now appeared as conquerors with the intention of remaining permanently in the new territories. Then Byzantium began to realize that the situation had in fact become grave.

Although the aged and ailing Heraclius could not possibly lead the army personally, I am convinced that he continued to underestimate the danger. It is possible that he deemed a punitive expedition under his personal command against detachments of robbers and depredators as beneath his dignity. Unfortunately, we do not possess contemporary sources for the period which would throw some light on the attitudes of the Byzantines of the time.

No thought had been given of organizing a regular army that could confront the enemy. Moreoever, no financial means were then available. The local militia was again inducted, and the allied Ghassanides were called upon to assist. A detachment of "Armenians" appeared on the scene[531] to reinforce the defense. Rather than select a generalissimo to lead the forces as he was wont to do in the past, Heraclius now divided the commands. Hence, the attitude that this was but a grand police action continued to hold. The invaders would

[531] I am surprised at this distinction of the corps of Armenians. In the imperial army there served various nationalities subject to Byzantium, however. Generally no distinction of race is made. Why, then, are the Armenians specially mentioned in this instance? Could it be a corps of troops originating from the Armeniac Theme and consequently referred to by the chroniclers as "Armenians" as a geographical inference, irrespective of the fact that there would have been many Armenians in the detachment?

be confronted by the local forces or with contingents from the territories near Syria, in the form of a major punitive operation against an extensive marauding expedition.

As Lammens[532] rightly observes, the successes of the Arabs were due less to the ability of their "emirs" and more to the incapability of the Byzantine generals. The invaders literally walked into Syria unhindered.

The inability of the imperial administration to grasp the significance of the continued successes of the Arab invaders and the inherent dangers that lay therein was one of the decisive factors contributing to the collapse of Byzantine control in those areas.

Another remarkable fact of the period is the attitude of the Byzantines, and all of Christianity, to Islam which was looked upon not as a new religion but as a new heresy, one of many that had made its appearance in the East. This attitude was maintained for years. The churches official, Nestorian or Monophysitic, initially did not feel the need for any special anti-Muslim action or defense. There were no Christian polemics against the theory of Islam, at least in the first century of Mohammedanism.[533] And this is yet another example of the mistaken policy and attitude of Byzantium, the lack of proper intelligence and the inability to grasp the significance of the new situation that had arisen.

4.

Yet another decisive role in the remarkable success of the Arabs was played by the hatred and the intense antipathy of the indigenous populations for anything Roman or Greek.

As has been pointed out in Volume I, the mass of the populations of Syria and Egypt was basically hostile to everything Greek and therefore hostile to Byzantium, torchbearer of the Greco-Roman intellect. Unfortunately, however, the administration of the Empire did nothing to alleviate or change this mentality or this enmity. On the contrary, the unchanging policy of the administration only aggravated further the animosity of the inhabitants. The continuous increase in taxes, the oppressive manner in which these taxes were collected, and the indifference of the central administration for the

[532] Lammens, La Syrie, I, 58.

[533] Cahen, Note sur l'accueil etc.; Calmette, Le Monde Féodal, p. 21.

betterment of the land, did everything but assuage the sentiments of these people. Compounding the animosity was the religious dissension. The opposition of the population in these territories to the Christian dogma as formulated after the acceptance by the official church of the canons of the Synod of Chalcedon, contributed much to making the growing cleavage between the people of these lands and the state of Byzantium even greater. The attempts of Heraclius to reach some kind of compromise in the ecclesiastical realm appeared to fall to the ground despite the supreme efforts made and the initial success of the plan. Whether personal ambitions were at the root of the compromise or whether through religious and ecclesiastical opposition it was believed that the feelings of the populations would be more clear-cut, the dissensions grew and the cleavage between the opposing parties became unbridgeable. Although the opposition now appeared in ecclesiastical form, at depth it originated in the nationalistic sentiment and the anti-Byzantine feelings of the population.[534]

Irrespective of the absence of design on the part of the Arabs to impose Islam by force, the new religion and its austere monotheistic nature understandably attracted these populations that had embraced Christianity as a monotheistic dogma in contrast to the old polytheism.

The general attitude of the Arabs after their first incursions attracted the sympathies of these people. The Arabs were wont to say that they had come only to expel the Greeks.[535] Such a statement of intention was well received by the frightened population that was religiously oppressed and burdened by heavy taxation. The people had no feelings of solidarity with the Byzantines and consequently often looked upon the Arab invaders as their deliverers.

It is indeed a melancholy fact how the influence of Byzantium in these parts of the Empire had crumbled to dust so easily.[536] Patricians, generals and civil servants were all up in arms against the central administration. Some surrendered immediately, others betrayed their trust, while yet others readily embraced Islam.

The animosity of the people of Syria against the Byzantines was unbelievably intense. Michael the Syrian conveys some of this feeling

[534] Caetani, Studi di Storia Orientale, I, 20.

[535] Nau, L'Araméen Chrétien.

[536] Nomicos, Introduction to the History of the Arabs, p. 164.

when he states that, seeing the wickedness of the Romans, God brought the children of Ishmael from the South to redeem them. He adds that if they (the Syrians) had suffered some misfortunes, these were as nothing in comparison to the great blessings of their redemption from the harshness and the wickedness of the Romans.[537]

Once the Arabs had decided to give up looting, especially after the policy of razzia had been converted to outright conquest, they changed attitude. Umar's influence undoubtedly had much to do with this change for he suggested the abandonment of the early barbaric practices of the conquerors.[538] The Arabs began to conduct themselves among the indigenous population in blameless fashion, and strove to obtain not only its sympathy but respect in order to gain its support.

At Emesa, for example, when the Arabs were forced to abandon the city before the advancing imperial army under the Sakellarius Theodore, they returned to the inhabitants the taxes which they had collected since they were no longer in a position to give them the agreed protection. The inhabitants replied that they preferred bondage under the Arabs to the oppression and tyranny they endured under the Romans.[539] The same policy was applied at Damascus and in other cities which they were forced to evacuate.

Throughout Syria and Palestine the Arabs proclaimed that the populations were free to retain freedom of religious belief, their language and their national and religious customs.

In view of such a policy, the Monophysites soon favoured Arab rule and began now to cooperate openly with the conqueror. This of course roused the anger of the Byzantines who in areas and cities which they had retaken, even temporarily, would take vengeful measures against the inhabitants.[540] To this change of attitude and almost wholehearted collaboration of the populations with the invaders, the numerous Arab tribes existing in Syria, Palestine and Mesopotamia gave much.

Economic factors, in addition, contributed to the more rapid infiltration especially of Syria. This country had imported its goods from Persia and the East in general, and sold them in turn, some of

[537] Michael the Syrian, II, 412, 413.
[538] Caetani, Annali etc., III, 813.
[539] Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, p. 211; Anonymous Chronicle of 1234, p. 195.
[540] Nau, Les Arabes Chrétiens etc., p. 104.

which were reworked, to the West through its various trade agents and the numerous Syrian merchants who had established themselves on the coasts and in the interior towns of Italy and France. Its trade was not dependent on Constantinople, but was taxed nevertheless, and taxed very heavily perhaps for this very reason. To the Syrians, therefore, the Arabs were better masters since the tax to which they were subjected was small and well defined.[541]

At all events, soon the invaders and the populations of these territories were united by a common sentiment, a hatred for the Byzantines.

The situation in Egypt was very similar. The animosity which the Copts retained against anything Byzantine helped the Arabs to a surprising degree.

According to John Nikiu[524] everyone had said that the victory of the Muslims was due to the tyranny of Heraclius through his agent Cyrus and to the persecution of the Orthodox (i.e. the Copts).

Michael the Syrian[543] and others record[544] that the Monophysite Patriarch Benjamin of Alexandria had come to an agreement with the Arabs for the surrender of Egypt, and so on, to submit the Egyptians to Arab rule.

Eutychius and the Arab chroniclers[545] relate that the Copts aided the Arabs in their battles against the Greeks.

Makrizi[546] himself in another study, as well as Abd al-Hakam, write that the leader of the Copts had written to his countrymen that the kingdom of the "Rum" (the Romans) had come to an end and that they should henceforth assist the Arabs. Eutychius relates that the Coptic elders, after the fall of Babylon, helped the Arabs to repair the roads and set up stores of food to supply them during their

[541] Runciman, C.E.H., II, 91.

[542] John Nikiu, ed. Zotenberg, p. 584.

[543] Michael the Syrian, II, 432, 433.

[544] Chronicle of 1234, p. 197. The Amr-Benjamin agreement before the complete occupation of Egypt smacks of legend. According to John Nikiu (p. 584) Benjamin returned to Alexandria 13 years after his flight. Since he fled in 630/631, he must have returned to Alexandria in 643–44. But by then the Byzantines had already evacuated Egypt. This information regarding Benjamin is confirmed also by Sevére d'El-Eschmounein (p. 231).

[545] Eutychius, p. 1105; Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, p. 346; Makrizi, Description topographique de l'Égypte ,ed. Bouriant, p. 467.

[546] Makrizi, ed. Blochet, p. 115.

advance against Alexandria. All sources are unanimous concerning the hatred the Egyptians held for the Byzantines and the help they gave to the Arabs. It is certainly difficult to maintain that the Copts awaited and looked upon the Arabs as liberators, for the latter were accustomed to slaughter, pillage and arson. But it is undoubtedly true that because of the intense hatred of the natives, they preferred to help the Arabs to expel the Byzantines. Perhaps Wiet is correct in maintaining that the Copts, who were well acquainted with the Arabs, had believed that another habitual razzia was involved, perhaps a greater raid than usual, and that once the razzia was over, the Arabs would return to their peninsula laden with loot. Hence it was an opportunity for the Copts, since the situation was but temporary, to assist the Arabs to oust the Byzantines on the one hand and then, following the withdrawal of the Arabs, to assume the administration of Egypt themselves.[547]

In the latter stages in Egypt collaboration between the conquerors and the Copts was well-nigh universal.[548] Nearly all civil servants and employees retained their posts. The sources relate also that several Duces cooperated with the Arabs. According to Severus,[549] the Dux Sanutius (?) remained loyal to Amr and helped him in many ways. When the Patriarch Benjamin arrived in Alexandria he hastened to pray on behalf of Amr.

Concerning the attitude of the Jewish communities in the course of the invasions of Syria, Palestine and Egypt, there exists some information. In Chapter XX of Volume I, I noted that the measures which Heraclius had taken against the Jewish population, which measures were applied with unusual severity in these territories, understandably forced the Jews to turn to the Arabs and to support them in their attempts to conquer these areas. This information is based on the Armenian chroniclers[550] and Michael the Syrian.[551]

News of the persecutions of the Jews in Arabia had certainly reached the ears of the Jewish populations of Syria and Palestine, but oppression by the imperial administration was so harsh and the

[547] Wiet, L'Égypte Arabe, p. 19; Wiet, Précis etc., II, 117.
[548] Grousset, L'Empire du Levant, p. 95.
[549] Sevére d'El-Eschmounein, pp. 231–233; Nau, Un colloque etc., p. 7.
[550] Sébéos, p. 94 ff.; Ardzrouni, p. 88.
[551] Michael the Syrian, II, 414.

hatred of the Jews for the Christians so deep, that the attacks on the Jewish-Arab tribes did not noticeably alter their feelings. In the early stages they did not intervene with arms as they had during the Persian invasion.[552] Many local leaders openly assisted the Arabs. A certain Jew by name Joseph conducted them to a secret underground passage beneath the walls, thus facilitating the capitulation of Caesaria in Palestine.[553] Many chroniclers record that the Jews rejoiced at news of the defeats of the Byzantine armies.[554]

Eventually the great majority of the Jewish population openly revealed its sympathy for the Arab and its animosity to Byzantium.[555] But those who provided the greatest service to the invaders appear to be the Samaritans. In those areas of the Jordan and throughout the length and breadth of Palestine, as soon as reports of the first defeats of the imperial armies were received, the Samaritans hastened to reinforce the Arabs with their arms. Many were used as guides, and others as spies.[556] It is most probable that many fought in the ranks of the Arabs against the Byzantines.[557] The services they had rendered to the conquerors should have been considerable in view of the fact that Abu Ubaydah had given them great privileges. There is a curious old tradition, smacking of legend, by which the Arabs tried to explain away the very special privileges given to the Samaritans. It says that a certain Samaritan, one Zohar or Sarmassa, had shown Mohammed that the Bible recorded his coming and that the Arabs would rule the world. According to the narrative of Abul Fath, it appears that Mohammed, in the light of the above, promised them security for their faith, life and property, even though the Samaritans refused to embrace Islam.[558]

At all events, one thing is certain, that in recognition of the great services they rendered to the Arabs, they were exempted from all

[552] See Volume I, Chap. VII; Graetz, Histoire des Juifs, III, 259 ff; Baron, Histoire d'Israel, III, 104.
[553] Baladhuri, ed. Hitti, p. 217.
[554] Jacobi, Doctrina Jacobi, ed. Bonwetsch, pp. 86–88.
[555] Lammens, Le Califat de Yazid Ier; Moss, La naissance du Moyen âge, p. 192; Levtchenko, Byzance, etc., p. 123.
[556] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 244; Fattal, Le Statut légal etc., p. 47 ff.; Baron, op. cit.; Graetz, op. cit., III, 927.
[557] Lammens, op. cit.
[558] Chronique Samaritaine; Montgomery, The Samaritans, p. 126.

land tax.[559] This privilege they were to retain for about 50 years until it was abolished by the Caliph Yazid I.

Undoubtedly, the attitude of the populations of these territories that were initially overrun by the Arabs was of considerable help to the conqueror and perhaps was the single most decisive factor contributing to their success. The de-Byzantinisation of both Syria and Egypt was very rapid. Immediately after the conquest and the withdrawal of the majority of the Greeks, the population practically in its entirety collaborated with the invader. But it is true, as I have pointed out again, that both the Greek language and the Greek coins were retained for many years to come.

And thus, the mistaken views of the Byzantines on the intentions of the Arabs and their attempts to face the invasions with the ordinary policing forces of the frontiers; the hatred for Byzantium displayed by the inhabitants of the territories; their collaboration with the conquerors; the complete lack of any religious fanaticism on the part of the Arabs; their subsequent exemplary conduct; their strategy and military tactics; their continuous numerical superiority on the battle field and their prudent use of the desert areas, combined with the exhaustion and military impotence of the two great Empires, were all in my opinion the decisive factors accounting for the remarkable successes of the Arabs. It is true that subsequently, but much later, would be added the religious fanaticism of the newly proselytised Muslims, especially those who came from the conquered areas such as Syria, where people were apt to be more fanatical.

[559] Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 244; Fattal, op. cit., p. 48.

CHAPTER VII

LAST YEARS OF HERACLIUS

In September 636, as has been recorded in Chapter IV, Heraclius, disillusioned by the situation in Syria and Palestine, departed for Constantinople.

Concerning the conveyance from Palestine of the Cross and other precious objects that were deemed sacred, the sources are conflicting. Theophanes[560] records that when Heraclius quitted Syria he took the treasures with him. Bury accepts the version.[561] On the basis of this tradition, Heraclius came down from Antioch to Jerusalem, took the treasures, then cut across the entire length of Syria. And this supposedly occurred soon after he learned of the reverse at Yarmuk and at a time that the Arabs were advancing unchecked into Syria. This story should be rejected as contrary to all reasoning.

Nicephorus[562] reports that the True Cross was sent to Constantinople soon after its restoration in Jerusalem. But his version is also unacceptable. As I have stated in Volume I (p. 255) both sources are unreliable, that of Theophanes because it is highly improbable and conflicts with common sense, and that of Nicephorus because the taking down of the True Cross so soon after its panegyric restoration would have been deemed sacrilegious.

Sébéos[563] informs us that the True Cross and treasures were sent by the inhabitants of Jerusalem themselves to Constantinople by the sea route.

It is my view which coincides with that of Frolow[564] that as soon as the news had been received of the defeat at Yarmuk, Heraclius ordered the treasures to be removed, and this was probably done

[560] Theophanes, p. 337.
[561] Bury, A History etc., II, 266.
[562] Nicephorus, p. 22.
[563] Sébéos, pp. 91 and 98; Ardzrouni, p. 91.
[564] Frolow, La relique etc., p. 198, fn. 60.

from Caesaria in Palestine. The roads leading to the coast were still open since the Arabs, with the advance of the imperial army, had withdrawn towards the desert, as I have noted in Chapter VI, abandoning the entire area between Damascus, Jerusalem and the coastline.

When the True Cross reached Constantinople, it was placed in St. Sophia, and there exposed to the worshippers[565] during the last three days of Easter week.

I.

Heraclius traversed the whole of Asia Minor and installed himself in the palace at Hierea,[566] south of Chalcedon on the Anatolian coast.[567]

In the meantime, a complete rupture had occurred in the relationships between Heraclius and his brother Theodore, of whom he had been formerly so fond and whom he had appointed as supreme commander of the imperial armies on many occasions. Theophanes records that after the battle of Adjnadayn, Theodore fled to Heraclius who was then in Emesa. But Nicephorus relates that it was in Antioch that Heraclius became enraged with Theodore. It is very difficult to unravel the details of this incident. It is certainly understandable that if, in fact, Theodore had abandoned his army soon after the battle to go to Emesa or Antioch where Heraclius was at the time, the vexation of the Emperor makes sense. But such action on the part of Theodore is contrary to his general conduct up to that point. Moreover, that which is recorded by Nicephorus and supported by Bury, to wit, that the disfavour of Theodore originated with his hostility to Martina because he had opposed her marriage to his brother, conflicts with the actual facts. After all, the wedding of the Emperor and Martina took place in early 614. From that date to 634 or 635 there is an interval of 20 years during which time Theodore was always a Curopalate, that is, holder of the most exalted title of the Empire, and the right hand man of Heraclius. Nicephorus[568] adds that Theodore had maintained that the defeats

[565] Frolow, op. cit., pp. 73, 74 and fn. 66, pp. 194, 195.
[566] Nicephorus, p. 25.
[567] See Volume I, p. 399.
[568] Nicephorus, p. 23.

of the Byzantine army were but divine retribution for the sin committed by Heraclius since, as has been pointed out, the marriage was deemed incestual because of the very close relationship of Heraclius to Martina. But in the interim between the wedding and the defeats of the Byzantines at the hands of the Arabs, there occurred the resounding triumph and decisive victory against Persia. Consequently, such a version becomes unacceptable. It is true, however, that Heraclius was enraged by his brother's actions, and ordered his arrest and his recall to Constantinople under armed escort. Moreover, Heraclius had written his son Constantine to degrade the unfortunate Theodore before the populace of the capital and then to imprison him. No further information on Theodore or the incident has survived.

Heraclius remained at the palace of Hierea, reluctant to cross the Bosphorus to enter Constantinople. As has been pointed out elsewhere,[569] Heraclius suffered from a morbid fear of water. There was a prophecy of his friend Stephanus that his death would be caused by water. In the meanwhile his health deteriorated even more. Heraclius suffered from severe dropsy. His illness, his exhaustion, his age, aggravated by the destruction of his great work before his very eyes, had all adversely influenced his character. The sudden turn in fortune had fallen heavily on the shoulders of the aged monarch,[570] both mentally and spiritually. The aggravation of his ailment had broken him physically. Despite the advice of his ministers, despite the demands of the populace, Heraclius refused to cross the Bosphorus. He had gathered the members of his family round him. On feast days and public holidays he would send his sons to the capital to represent him, but they were obligated to return to Hierea whenever the ceremonies had ended. For racing contests, the same ritual was followed.[571]

Heraclius was overcome by disillusionment and despair. He appeared to have lost complete self-control. He was depressed, irritable and suspected all those round him. The pronounced fear of water did not recede even when he was informed that a plot against him had been uncovered.

[569] See Volume I, pp. 219.
[570] Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, p. 99.
[571] Nicephorus, p. 25.

2.

At the close of 637 (see Note XXIV), Heraclius had received reports that a plot was being instigated against him. Sébéos[572] records that the intention of the plotters was in fact nothing less than his murder. Involved in the intrigue were his bastard son Atalarichus, the magister Theodore, son of his brother Theodore, Varastirosz Bagraduni[573] who had been appointed by the Persians as commander of Persian Armenia in 628 and had subsequently joined Heraclius, David Zacharuni and many others of the ruling circles of Constantinople.

Despite the narrative of Sébéos, I do not believe that the conspirators, at the head of whom were the son and the nephew of Heraclius, had any intention of murdering the Emperor or for that matter of replacing him.[574] I presume that there were two motivating reasons for the conspiracy, firstly, that the mental, physical and moral decline of Heraclius had made him incapable of ruling effectively, and secondly, the unspeakable pressures brought to bear on the decaying Emperor by Martina to secure the succession in whole or in part for her sons. There existed an intense hatred for Martina, especially on the part of her subjects. Many feared that Constantine, the next in line of succession, who enjoyed much popularity, would be deprived of his rights of succession. Moreover, he was sickly and there existed the danger that Martina would rule alone in the name of her sons who were not yet of age. I believe such to be the actual reasons for the conspiracy on the part of the close relatives and friends of Heraclius.

A Curator who was present at one of the conspiratorial meetings gave away the secret to Heraclius who without bothering to investigate the matter at any length[575] straightway ordered the arrest of all the plotters. The punishments he inflicted may seem extremely harsh to us, but mutilation was deemed more merciful than death.

His son Atalarichus had his nose slit, an arm mutilated, and was exiled to the Princes Islands. The magister Theodore also received the same punishment and was exiled to the island of "Gavdo-

[572] Sébéos, p. 93.

[573] Varastirosz was the son of Sebat Bagraduni, the so-called Xosrov Snum, who was prince and governor (marzpan) of Persian Armenia under Chosroes.

[574] Pernice, L'Imperatore Eraclio, p. 292.

[575] Lebeau-Saint Martin, XI, 224.

melete."[576] Nicephorus relates that the governor of that island was ordered to mutilate a leg as well. Varastirosz and his entire family were only sent into exile to a city which Sébéos calls Ahksor.[577] Punishments were inflicted on all the plotters.

The case of David Zacharuni is very strange indeed. He was apprehended by Mzez Gnuni, commander of the Armeniac Theme, and sent in chains to Constantinople. But en route he managed to free himself and slay his escorts.[578] He then went to Armenia, formerly under Persian control, and having reached an agreement with the Armenians, attacked Mzez Gnuni, who had roused much hostility against himself in the area, and slew him. Soon after, he appointed himself general (?). Heraclius was not in a position to punish the murderers of his general nor to seize the perpetrators of the crime. He was confronted by the widespread opposition of the Armenians. The latter finally persuaded the Emperor to appoint David Zacharuni as Isxan, that is, prince and civil and military governor of what was formerly Persian Armenia.[579] He was also given the exalted title of "Curopalate."[580]

Heraclius had remained for more than a year at the palace in Hierea. But he was pressed to return, especially after the uncovering of the conspiracy. This pressure came not only from the ruling class of the capital, but also from Martina who it seems was most anxious and insistent about his return to ensure, temporarily at least, some part of the succession to her sons. I purposely say some part of the succession because of the illness of Constantine who had been crowned co-Emperor and consequently was the recognized successor next in line to Heraclius. In the event of Constantine's death the succession would have remained questionable since, as has been pointed out in Volume I, an inherited line of succession was not recognized at Byzantium.

[576] Nicephorus, p. 25. Gavdomelete is the island of Gozzo, near Malta.
[577] Sébéos, p. 93. In footnote 2 of the same page, Macler states that Ahksor probably meant Africa. Hence Varastirosz had been exiled to a city in Africa.
[578] Sébéos, p. 94.
[579] On page 302 of Volume I, I had written that David Zacharuni was appointed in the place of Mzez Gnuni, but this is incorrect. David was not named general of the Armeniac Theme but prince of former Persian Armenia.
[580] Sébéos, p. 94, John Catholicos, p. 69; Toumanoff, Armenia and Georgia, p. 605.

Despite, however, all the pressure to return, Heraclius could not overcome his morbid fear of water. And so the Eparch of Constantinople conceived a plan to bridge the Bosphorus. He collected numerous ships and vessels which he joined together extending from the Asiatic shore to the European side of the Bosphorus. On these ships he placed planks for footing, then covered the two sides of the vessels facing the water with branches of trees with the result that one had the illusion of going along a tree-lined lane. In such manner he managed to hide the sea completely from sight.[581] Work proceeded apace and many hands worked to complete the illusion. And finally, Heraclius was persuaded to enter this bridge across the Bosphorus. But he did so on horseback which Nicephorus describes so quaintly in his own words, "crossed on horseback over the sea like crossing over the land."[582] Heraclius touched ashore on the coast of the gulf of "Fidalia".[583] Thence he continued on horseback to the Barbyssus River[584] where he crossed over the bridge and entered Constantinople through the Blachernae Gate, then hastened to his palace. One can well imagine that Heraclius, now in the chilly atmosphere of the capital, had nostalgically recalled the triumphant entry into Constantinople only eight years before when he had returned victorious from the war against Persia.

As has been mentioned, a basic reason for the return to Constantinople of Heraclius was to settle the matter of his succession. The pressures brought to bear on him by Martina to ensure the right of her children were persistent and unrelenting. But the reaction in the capital was also great. Besides the affection the populace had for Constantine, it should be borne in mind, as has been repeatedly pointed out, that the marriage of Heraclius and Martina was in-

[581] Van Millingen, Byzantine Constantinople, p. 176.

[582] Nicephorus, pp. 25, 26.

[583] Gulf of Fidalia. According to Janin (Constantinople Byzantine, p. 434) this site should be identified with the gulf of Bebek where the Chagan of the Avars in 626 had landed his single-straked ships to try to transport the Persian troops from the Asiatic to the European shore (see Volume I of the present work). E. Mamboury (Istanbul Touristique, ed. 1951) agrees with this identity. On the other hand Van Millingen (op. cit., p. 176) identifies the bay of Fidalia with Baltan-Liman.

[584] Barbyssus or Baryssus. River near Constantinople. It empties into the Golden Horn near Eyiub. The modern Keyiat-Hanes or Kagi-Thanesu.

cestuous and consequently many considered the offspring of this forbidden marriage as illegitimate.

But Heraclius had to face the whole problem of succession more realistically. He was aware that his first-born son Constantine was sickly, hence there always existed the ever-present danger of early death. It is true that Constantine had offspring, the young Heraclius and Theodosius. But in 638 the sons were yet children. The young Heraclius, son of Constantine, and grandson of the Emperor, was then about 7 1/2 years of age. There existed a danger of disturbances, therefore, in the event of the premature death of Constantine. In the light of such reasoning and in order to please Martina, he decided to crown as co-Emperor his other son Heraclius as well who was surnamed by the chroniclers Heracleonas.

On July 7, 638 (11th Indiction),[585] Heraclius summoned to the palace the patriarch and the entire Senate. In the presence of his successor and co-Emperor Constantine, the prayer for long and happy reign was chanted in the chapel of St Stephanus[586] at the palace. Following this, he removed from the head of the young Heraclius (Heracleonas), then 12 years of age, the kamelafkion[587] which he wore as Caesar and placed the royal crown in its place. After another prayer, his son David, aged $7^1/_2$ years, was proclaimed Caesar, and on the latter's head was placed the kamelafkion which had been borne previously by the youthful Heraclius.

All the patricians had gathered in the closed square before the palace known as the Augustaeum,[588] and occupied the "gradelia of the aréas," a place for the Senators.[588a] There they received the Emperor with his three sons. Following this, all the officials from the rank of consuls (hypates) to the rank of illustrii, greeted the

[585] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Cerem., II, Ch. 27.

[586] Very old chapel situated in that part of the Grand Palace known as Daphni. The chapel had been converted from a bedchamber of the palace at the time of Constantine the Great.

[587] The Kamelafkion or kalymafchium is a kind of covering for the head. Today it appears as a high cylindrical hat worn by the Orthodox clergy, culminating in a conical peak.

[588] A closed square in front of the main entrance to the palace, the so-called Chalke, where large edifices were to be found. Herein were St. Sophia and the Senate House among other buildings.

[588a] Constantine Porpyrogenitus, De Cerem., I, 43 and II, 27; Vogt, Commentaires etc., II, pp. 42 ff.; Christofilopoulou, Election etc., p. 69.

Emperor, the two newly-crowned heirs to the throne and the new Caesar. After the officials came the civil servants, the imperial guards (the Scholae) and the Demes (the Blue and the Green faction) and all joined in hailing the royal dignitaries. Finally, Heraclius, with his sons, entered the Great Church (St. Sophia) wherein was sung the great mass.

Nicephorus records that not only was David proclaimed Caesar, but Marinus, the other son of Heraclius. But this information is incorrect.[589]

It was about this time that new coins were issued. On the obverse Heraclius was depicted with Constantine on his right hand and the young Heraclius to the left. They all wore their diadems and each held a globe in the hand. The reverse side of the coin bore the inscription VICTORIA AUGS (victory crowns the emperors) with a crucifix in the center set on three steps. Silver coinage carried the old inscription DEUS ADJUTA ROMANIS (God helps the Romans).[590]

In such a manner did Heraclius believe that he had ensured a regular line of succession for his family.

3.

In Chapter XX of Volume I of the present history, I described the efforts made by Heraclius to bridge the gap that had separated the Christian world of the East in the wake of the 4th Ecumenical Synod which had been convened at Chalcedon.

The compromise solution between the official church on the one hand and Monophysitic Armenia, the Copts (Monophysites) and most probably the Monophysitic Jacobites of Syria and Mesopotamia on the other was the acceptance of the two natures of Jesus Christ revealed in His person through a single energy. Against this interpretation which had been accepted by Pope Honorius with certain reservations, Sophronius, Patriarch of Jerusalem, launched a vehement attack.

[589] Nicephorus, p. 27. The information conflicts with that of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Cerem., II, Ch. 29. In the reception of January 4, 639, at the Hippodrome, that is, about six months later, David is addressed as Caesar whilst Marinus is called Nobilissimus.

[590] Sabatier, Monnaies Byzantines, I, 285–288; Wroth, Catalogue etc., p. XXVI; Goodacre, A Handbook etc., p. 98.

Heraclius' policy was to unite the divided world of Byzantium which consisted of many diverse peoples in a single uniform faith. Hence the State would function more smoothly only if it were rid of religious divisions. The singleness of faith would replace the lack of homogeneity amongst the diverse populations.

But the Arab attack, the absence of any reaction initially on the part of the indigenous populations and lastly their open collaboration with the invaders, had proven the policy of the Byzantine administration and of Heraclius a failure. The peoples of the Eastern provinces were no longer interested in religious compromises. They were more anxious to rid themselves of Byzantine rule.

In the meantime, in the West, too, there began a reaction against the dogma of the single energy.

In the light of the above, Sergius decided to revert to the time-established custom of issuing, in the form of a royal decree, a Confession of Faith binding to all the faithful. Together with the abbot Pyrrhus he drafted a decree entitled the "Ecthesis (statement) of the Orthodox faith". Bearing in mind the views of Pope Honorius in which the latter suggested that all arguments concerning the energies in the person of Christ should cease forthright, Sergius incorporated a clause in the decree which explicitly forbade discussions of a single or dual energy. The decree concludes with a single will in Christ.[591] For the first time, moreover, in the reign of Heraclius, Severus, the old Patriarch of Antioch and one of the leaders of the Monophysitic doctrine, was excommunicated. It is through the Ecthesis that the Monothelitic dogma first makes it appearance.

It is maintained that the Ecthesis was drawn up towards the close of 634[592] and early 635,[593] and that it was kept secret until the return of Heraclius from the East when the latter was persuaded by Sergius to sign the decree and have it circulated.[594] This interpretation which is based for the most part on a letter of Pope John, about

[591] Mansi, XI, 537 ff.

[592] Hergenröther, II, 320.

[593] This I have also recorded in Volume I. But after further study of the period, I believe that this date is incorrect because it was not until after 636, with the now wholehearted support of the populations for the invaders, that the attempts of reconciliation by Heraclius had proven a failure.

[594] Duchêsne, L'Eglise au VIe siecle, p. 410.

which more later, cannot stand either logically or chronologically.

There was no need to await the return of Heraclius to present him with a decree of such importance for signature. It could have been sent to Antioch where the Emperor was at the time, and it would not be the first time that a document was sent abroad for the royal signature.

As I have pointed out, the entire conciliatory policy cannot be shown to have been a failure in the period before 636. Heraclius arrived in Constantinople in the latter months of 636. Why then did he wait whole years before signing the decree?

The version to which I refer is based primarily on the reasoning that the Ecthesis was but a further concession to the Monophysites. But this is at variance with reality. Certain concessions which had been given to the Monophysites in the older agreements are revoked by the Ecthesis. Grumel[595] most correctly observes that the Ecthesis was aimed at putting an end to the agitation caused in the so-called "Orthodox" circles by concessions to the Monophysites. The Ecthesis was a retreat and through it an attempt was made to disguise this retreat. It was precisely on these grounds that Heraclius refused initially to sign the decree. The Ecthesis had subverted much of what had been agreed with the Monophysites. It is true that the Eastern provinces had been gradually slipping from imperial control. But irrespective of whether Egypt and Mesopotamia with their vast numbers of Monophysites still remained within the Empire, it is quite likely that Heraclius and possibly the central administration had still not lost the hope of recovering these provinces. Hence they did not wish to appear to be subverting the initial agreement.

The Ecthesis unfortunately had precisely the opposite results of what had been hoped for. It divided the West for many years to come without gaining a single Monophysite in the East.

The Ecthesis was approved by Heraclius and published in the 12th Indiction[596] (September 1, 638 to August 31, 639) and most probably in October 638.[597]

The Patriarch Sergius summoned urgently in November of the same year (638) the Synod of Constantinople, perhaps the local

[595] Grumel, Recherches sur l'histoire du Monothelisme.

[596] Mansi, X, 1000–1.

[597] Bréhier, La Fin du régne etc., p. 132; Caspar, Geschichte des Papsttums, II, 537; Héfélé-Leclercq, Histoire des Conciles, III, 388.

synod (the endemousa),[598] which agreed with the Ecthesis. "We, too, agree to and confirm the Ecthesis."[599] It threatened with excommunication or deposition all those who did not accept its articles.[600] A copy of the Ecthesis was posted in the narthex of St. Sophia.[601]

The Ecthesis was accepted by Sergius, Bishop of Joppa, who was acting bishop for the interests of the vacant patriarchal throne of Jerusalem, and the newly elected Patriarch of Antioch Macarius who, however, was in Constantinople since the Arabs were in possession of his see.[602]

Another copy of the Ecthesis was sent to the Patriarch of Alexandria and Pope Severinus. These copies were delivered by the Magister Militum (the general) Eustathius.[603] The latter left Constantinople most probably in November 638 since he was also the bearer of a letter from the Patriarch Sergius to Cyrus.[604] He therefore had quitted the capital before the death of Sergius who died in early December 638. Together with the text of the Ecthesis, Cyrus was sent as a gift a stavrotheke (reliquary) containing a piece of the True Cross.[605]

Cyrus replied that he agreed with the phrasing of the Ecthesis but expressed doubts whether the new Pope of Rome Severinus[606] would approve.

[598] Héfélé-Leclercq, op. cit., III, 391.

[599] Grumel, Les Actes des Patriarches, No. 292, p. 117.

[600] Mansi, X, 1000–1.

[601] Mansi, X, 1032.

[602] Héfélé-Leclercq, op. cit., III, 390. Bréhier, op. cit., writes: 1) Sophronius was succeeded by Sergius, Bishop of Joppa. This is not correct. The patriarchal throne remained vacant for many years. Sergius was only an acting Bishop. 2) That Macedonius was elected Patriarch of Antioch in 639 and that he was ordained by the Patriarch Sergius. But Sergius died in December 638. Grumel (La Chronologie, p. 447) cites as patriarch of Antioch a certain Macedonius, but for 639.

[603] John Nikiu writes (p. 574) that the general John delivered the reliquary ty Cyrus. Butler (p. 182) also relies on this source and names the bearer to Cyrus of the Ecthesis, the letter of Sergius and the reliquary as "General John". But this is inaccurate. It is possible that the general John brought the reliquary, but the Ecthesis and the letter were delivered by Eustathius. See Mansi, X, 1004.

[604] Mansi, X, 1115; Grumel, Les Actes, etc., No. 293, p. 117.

[605] Frolow, La Relique de la vraie Croix, p. 81, and fn. 61, p. 193.

[606] Mansi, X, 1005; Bréhier, op. cit., p. 133; Hergenröther, op. cit., II, 320.

There exists some difficulty concerning the precise date on which Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople, died in December 638. Theophanes and most of the Byzantine chroniclers do not record the date. Nicephorus writes the 12th Indiction and his Short Chronicle[607] states that Sergius was patriarch of Constantinople for 28 years, 7 months and 21 days. Sergius was elected Patriarch on April 18, 610.[608] Hence on the basis of the information supplied by Nicephorus he died on the 8th or 9th of December 638.

Constantine Porphyrogenitus[609] informs us that "on the 13th of the month of December, the 12th Indiction, Sergius, Patriarch of Constantinople died." There exists a slight variation in the date, admittedly of only a few days, between the dates of Nicephorus and Constantine. But I suspect that Constantine refers to the funeral and not to the death of Sergius. In his text, Constantine immediately thereafter writes of the funeral and says it took place on a Sunday. Actually, December 13, 638, falls on a Sunday, therefore his death occurred on the 8th or 9th of the month and his funeral on the 13th of December. Sergius was buried in the church of the Holy Apostles.

The throne of the late Sergius was then occupied by Pyrrhus, "presbyter of this church, monk and leader of the monasteries and abbot of Chrysopolis ..."[610] He was ordained Patriarch on December 20, 638.[611] According to the Metropolitan Gennadius,[612] Pyrrhus was ordained in January 639. But this does not appear to be correct since, according to Nicephorus, Heraclius loved Pyrrhus as a brother, and it stands to reason that he would wish to fill the vacancy of the see of Constantinople without delay, especially in times so difficult for the Empire.

Pyrrhus summoned at the end of December 638 or the early part of January 637 a synod at Constantinople at which he reaffirmed support of the decree of the Ecthesis. All bishops present agreed, and then, according to custom, a synodical encyclical was drawn up

[607] Nicephorus, History, p. 26; Idem., Chronographicon Syntomon, p. 118.
[608] Chronicle Paschale, I, 699. See also Volume I of this history, p. 78.
[609] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Cerem., II, Ch. 30.
[610] Nicephorus, Chronographicon Syntomon, p. 118.
[611] Grumel, Acts des Patriarches, p. 118.
[612] Gennadius, Metropolitan of Heliopolis, etc., p. 238.

containing the new credo of faith and sent to all Christian churches.[613]

Pope Honorius who had supported the conciliatory moves of Heraclius and Sergius died on October 12, 638.[614] Severinus was elected to succeed him. But before he could be ordained he had to receive the imperial sanction.[615] This problem and the incidents of Rome as well as the situation in the Italian peninsula at the time will be studied at greater length in another volume. I shall for the moment confine myself to the matter of the Ecthesis and the disputations that began to emerge between Constantinople and Rome.

The Magister Eustathius, who had delivered a copy of the Ecthesis to Cyrus, had been commissioned to proceed to Ravenna from Alexandria. There he was to give the offical imperial orders to the Exarch of Italy, Isaac, together with a copy of the Ecthesis. The orders were explicit. The election of Severinus would not be validated, hence he could not occupy the papal throne until he agreed to support the contents of the Ecthesis.

Isaac decided to go to Rome himself because he feared that following the incidents involving the Chartularius Mauricius and the looting of the treasures of the Lateran, Severinus would be illy disposed to the imperial commands. To overcome the opposition that existed in Rome, Isaac exiled many dignitaries of the church.[616] Despite the efforts of the Exarch, Severinus refused to commit himself on the Ecthesis until his election to the throne was recognized and he was officially installed as pope.[617]

Isaac had allowed a partial looting of the treasury of the Lateran. A portion of the treasures thus looted was sent to Constantinople.[618]

In the light of these incidents, relations between Rome and Byzantium had taken a turn for the worse. Severinus, however, realized that his election would not be confirmed and consequently he could not occupy the papal throne of Rome. Under the circum-

[613] Mansi, X, 1001–4.
[614] Caspar, op. cit., p. 257.
[615] Hartmann, Geschichte Italiens u.s.w., II, 186.
[616] Liber Pontificalis, I, 328; Diehl, Etudes ... dans l'Exarchat de Ravenne, p. 404.
[617] Grumel, Recherches etc., Héfélé-Leclercq, op. cit., III, 392.
[618] Liber Pontificalis, I, 328.

stances, he decided to send special apocrisarii[619] to Constantinople to negotiate the impasse. After protracted negotiations the delegates promised that Severinus would agree to the wording of the Ecthesis,[620] following which orders were sent to Isaac to validate the election of Severinus and to permit his ordination.

The ordination took place in the presence of the Exarch Isaac on May 28, 640, nearly 18 months after the election. Following the installation of the new pope, Isaac departed for Ravenna.[621]

Severinus, however, did not keep the promises made by the delegates, nor most probably the promises he had himself given to the Exarch Isaac.[622] He summoned the local synod of Rome and soundly rejected the dogmatic content of the Ecthesis and at the same time condemned Monothelitism.[623]

Many scholars maintain that Severinus refused to sign the Ecthesis. But this is not so. Neither the pope nor any other church dignitary signs or issues royal decrees. He must merely agree with the dogmatic content of the decree in order to apply it ecclesiastically within his see.[624] The confusion arises I think from the fact that all historians look upon the pope as he is today, that is independent, and overlook or forget that at that period of the Roman Empire, by which it was then known, the pope or his equals in rank, the patriarchs, were merely subjects of the Emperor. But about this more later when I discuss the conflicts between Constantine III, the surnamed Constans, and the church of Rome.

[619] Apocrisarius or apocrisiarius, a delegate, ambassador, or specially a representative of church authority.

[620] Héfélé-Leclercq, op. cit.; Migne, P.L., 129, p. 583; Caspar, op. cit., II, 527; Diehl, op. cit., p. 404; Brooks, C.M.H., II, 399.

[621] Liber Pontificalis.

[622] That Severinus had himself given any promises to Isaac cannot be deduced from any source. But I believe that Isaac, who was an able and sensible Exarch, could not have been contented with the assurances of the delegates alone,and furthermore, before he approved of the election and allowed the ordination to take place, it is my view at least, that he would have had discussions with Severinus. I think it is impossible that he would not have received assurances from Severinus himself confirming what the delegates had promised. And it was for this reason that he remained in Rome.

[623] Héfélé-Leclercq, op. cit., p. 392; Hergenröther, op. cit., II, 320; Diehl, op. cit., p. 404; Romano, La Dominazione Barbaricha in Italia, p. 300.

[624] At this period, popes and patriarchs were known as archbishops or simply bishops (Theophanes, pp. 329, 339, etc.)

Yet another problem arises which should be studied and resolved. It is maintained that Heraclius renounced the Ecthesis before he died.[625] Most scholars cite Mansi, XI, 9, to support this contention. But the reference in Mansi concerns the Latin translation of the Acta of Maximus.

It is true that in the Acta of Maximus[626] it is recorded that Maximus, under questioning by the patrician Troilus, replied that Heraclius had written to John, the pope, who had condemned the Ecthesis in a letter to the Patriarch Pyrrhus. In his letter, Heraclius stated that the Ecthesis was not drafted by his order, but that the Patriarch Sergius had drawn it up five years before he (Heraclius) had returned from the East, and the Patriarch submitted it to the Emperor for his signature when the latter arrived in Constantinople. And being informed that some do not approve of the Ecthesis, he denied its authorship.

This information cannot stand the test either of logic or of chronology.

Heraclius reached the palace at Hierea towards the end of 636. Hence the Ecthesis was drafted in 631 or 632 (five years before his return). But the conciliatory gesture was made on the basis of the theory of a single energy. Such was the content of the letters of Sergius to Pope Honorius. And this was the reason for Sophronius' opposition when he circulated the encyclical containing his dogma in 634. This, too, was the basis for the agreement in Alexandria which Sophronius had opposed so vehemently (see Chapter XX, Volume I, of this history). By what manner of logic could Sergius on the one hand work for the acceptance of the theory of a single energy, and on the other prepare a decree by which further discussion on the energies in the person of Christ would be prohibited? This part of the statement of Maximus is, therefore, inaccurate and conflicts with the actual events.

And the information that only then from the letter of Pope John Heraclius had learned that there were "certain" people who did not accept the Ecthesis is also inaccurate. The instructions given to the Exarch Isaac concerning the confirmation of the election of Pope

[625] Brooks, C.M.H., II, 399; Bréhier, La fin du regne etc., V, 132; Devreesse, L'Église d'Afrique etc.; Gennadius, Metropolitan of Heliopolis, History etc., p. 237; Héfélé-Leclercq, op. cit., III, 387; Hergenröther, op. cit., II, 320.
[626] Migne, P.G., Vol. XC, p. 125.

Severinus were explicit. Moreover, during the whole of 639 negotiations were being conducted with the delegates of Severinus precisely on this matter. Consequently by the end of 638 Heraclius was well aware that "certain" people were opposed to the Ecthesis.

Seriously ill, Heraclius succumbed to his ailment on February 11, 641. But more on this in the following paragraphs. Pope John was ordained on December 24, 640. When he managed to conduct the Christmas celebrations, to summon a synod, to write Pyrrhus, to send the letter (more than a month's journey away), and when Pyrrhus managed to read the letter to the deathly ill Heraclius, and when Heraclius replied to the Pope, is beyond comprehension. Chronologically, not to mention the distance that separated them, it was absolutely impossible for all these occurrences to have taken place before the death of Heraclius.

But even were we to accept the above as accurate and within the realm of possibility, there always remains the question of why Heraclius, if he now considered the Ecthesis to have been a blunder, did not immediately revoke it?

For these reasons I am convinced that Heraclius did not correspond with Pope John. It is conceivable that the letter of the Pope, which was a synodical epistle addressed to all the heads of church, had arrived in Constantinople after the death of Heraclius.[627] It is possible that the son of Heraclius, who was deemed on "Orthodox" (see Chapter X), wrote something of the above nature, wanting to explain his father's attitude. And perhaps Maximus, who was then neither in Constantinople nor in Rome, was badly misinformed of the events, and with the stubbornness of an old man coloured these events, without, of course, having any ulterior motive in so doing. At all events, I have failed to uncover any letter of Heraclius addressed to Pope John, and I believe that the entire affair originates from this phrase that was put into the mouth of Maximus.[628]

[627] In his study, Recherches sur l'histoire du Monothelisme, in Echos d'Orient, Grumel reaches such a conclusion.

[628] Only the Acta of Maximus, which were written by his pupils, on the basis of what the master related to them, have survived. Unfortunately, the minutes of the interrogation and trial of Maximus have not survived. In addition, no text of a political or religious nature of that period has come down to us. Hence we know what Maximus said, because these answers were given to his pupils, but we do not know what their replies were.

4.

The condition of Heraclius continued to worsen until finally an acute inflammation brought the fatal end.[629] The exact date of his demise presents some difficulties. Although there no longer remains any doubt about the year or the precise day of his death, some doubt exists concerning the month.

The sources of the date of his death can be summarized as follows:

I Byzantine

1. Theophanes and Cedrenus: The 11th of March, having reigned 30 years and 10 months. Since Heraclius was crowned Emperor on October 5, 610,[630] the 30 years and 10 months give us August 641. Why, then, did he spell out the month of March? For this reason many scholars have substituted the Greek letter iota designating 10th, in Theophanes and Cedrenus, to the letter epsilon (meaning 5th) which brings us to March. Many older historians have accepted the corrected dating.
2. George the Monk, Leo the Grammarian, Theodosius Melitenus, Zonaras, Joel and Glycas, who all have a common source, mention nothing specific, except Zonaras who says that he died in the 31st year of his reign (correctly).
3. Nicephorus, who records that Heraclius lived 66 years, reigned 30 years, 4 months and 6 days. This gives us February 11, 641.

II Eastern

1. The Syrian chroniclers[631] write unanimously that Heraclius reigned 30 years and five months. This leads us to March 641.
2. Other chroniclers such as the Chronicle of the desert Seert, Al-Makine and Eliae Metropolitan of Nisibensi have different dates.
3. John of Nikiu, the only contemporary chronicler, mentions February of the 14th Indiction (641). He adds that it was then the 357th year of Diocletian (641).

[629] John Nikiu, ed. Zotenberg, p. 563.

[630] See Volume I of this history, p. 91.

[631] Michael Syrus, II, 426; Agapius, p. 478/218; Chronicle of 1234; Nöldeke, Die von Guidi usw. The latter corrects the chronicle in fn. 1 of p. 46 which mentions 28 years, to March 11, 641.

III Western

These sources are for the most part unreliable and give confusing or fantastic dates

The only serious sources include:

1. Anastasius the Librarian[632] who records that Heraclius died in the 31st year of his reign, having reigned 30 years!
2. The Necrologium of Emperors[633] stating that Heraclius died on January 11, 641.

On the basis therefore of the above sources we have three dates:

1. February 11, 641, given by Nicephorus and confirmed by Nikiu.
2. March 11, 641, Theophanes and Cedrenus (corrected) and Syrian chroniclers.
3. January 11, 641, which derives from the Necrologium of the Emperors.

Most recent historians[634] have accepted the date February 11, 641, because this is explicitly recorded by the Patriarch Nicephorus. But lately, Grierson,[635] in his fine study, raises the problem again, basing himself on the Necrologium of the Emperors. He maintains that the precise date of the death of Heraclius is January 11, 641. His argument is based on sound scholarship, but he has not convinced me (see Note XXV) of the correctness of the views he develops. I believe that on the basis of extant sources at hand, Heraclius did in fact die on February 11, 641. Such is the information provided by the Patriarch Nicephorus who because of his background and training was in a position to confirm this date. Moreover, the date is further verified and explicitly so by his near contemporary John, Bishop of Nikiu.

[632] Anastasii Bibl., ed. de Boor, p. 214 ff.

[633] Chronicon Altinate et Gradense, ed. Cessi, p. 107.

[634] Ostrogorsky, History etc., p. 100; Diehl, Le Monde Oriental, p. 235; Amantos, History etc., I, 322; Pernice, L'Imperatore etc., p. 301; Bury, A History etc., II, 273; Bréhier, La fin du règne etc., V, 142; Gelzer, Epitomos etc.; Metropolitan Gennadius, History etc., p. 238; Ostrogorsky, Die Chronologie des Theophanes usw.; Caetani, Annali, IV, 417 who dates the time as the 23rd of the month of Safar, in the 20th year of the Hegira (February 11, 641).

[635] Grierson, The Tombs and Obits etc.

All the later chroniclers depicted the ailment of Heraclius with the blackest of colours.[636] They concluded that his illness came about as the result of the abominable crime he had committed, of accepting to wed in unholy alliance (in accordance with the canons of the church) his niece. Martina was the daughter of his sister.[637] And they nearly all add, "this was in punishment of his unlawful deed."

The funeral was conducted in accordance with the formula for the death of royal personages. The etiquette is beautifully described by Constantine Porphyrogenitus.[638]

The body was carried from the palace through the central gate of Chalke, and the funeral procession then followed the Mese as far as Philadelphion, turning at that point into the northeastern branch of the Mese as far as the church of the Holy Apostles in whose precinct the mausolea with the tombs of emperors were to be found. There the open bier containing the dead emperor with a crown on his head[639] was exposed to public mourning for three days. The body was watched over by eunuchs[640] which appears to have been the last wish of the emperor. Heraclius was 66 years of age when he died.

The body was interred in the Monument of Justinian in a sepulchral shrine of white Dokimite onyx stone.[641] Next to him lay another shrine of green marble from Thessaly in which his first wife Fabia or Eudocia had been buried.[642]

[636] Nicephorus, Cedrenus, George the Monk and others write, "to such an extent did the ailment progress, that whenever he wanted to pass water, he would place a board on his abdomen to turn his privy part and avoid discharge of the water towards his face."

[637] Bury, op. cit., fn. 2, p. 273, adds that in the superstitious belief of a patriarch (meaning Nicephorus), the nature of the ailment was determined by the nature of the sin that Heraclius had committed by marrying Martina. It was the body of the crime that was punished.

[638] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Cerem., I, Ch. 60.

[639] Cedrenus, pp. 752, 753.

[640] Nicephorus, p. 27; Cedrenus, p. 752. The latter records that the coffin remained uncovered for 4 days. Leo the Grammarian, p. 155 and Theodosius Melitene, p. 106, write the same.

[641] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De. Cerem., II, Ch. 42. The Necrologium of Emperors says that the sarcophagus of Heraclius was built of Proconesian marble, Grierson, op. cit., p. 48; Downey, the Tombs etc. Dokimia was an ancient town of Phrygia near Eski Kara Hissar where there existed very rich marble quarries. Proconesus is an island in the Sea of Marmara also possessing rich quarries.

[642] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, op. cit.; Chronicon Paschale, I, 703.

CHAPTER VIII

STATE OF THE EMPIRE AT THE DEATH OF HERACLIUS AND A SURVEY OF HIS REIGN

Before continuing with the narration of events of the 7th Century, it would perhaps be in order to give a brief summary of the accomplishments of Heraclius and to present a picture of the conditions existing in Byzantium, the West and the East at the moment of his death. It is undoubtedly difficult to do so because it is impossible to describe the situation that existed in the then known world at a specific time, or at least, in a particular century. But the age coinciding with the death of Heraclius constitutes a special phenomenon. Byzantium had at that time definitively lost the Eastern provinces which contained populations hostile or alien to Greek and Greco-Roman thought. With this loss the Empire began to abandon forever its ecumenicity, despite the possessions it still retained in Africa and Italy. But the loss of the Eastern provinces on the other hand strengthened Byzantium[643] since it now possessed a more homogeneous population. The remaining provinces, except those in the West, were populated by peoples who were for the most part Greek or Hellenized. The faith was now uniform, or as they were wont to say, Orthodox. With its confinement to Greek-speaking territories, the reorganization of the administration became much easier.[644] But more important still, the defense of the Empire against attacks from the East became strengthened. These attacks on the other hand were to grow more intensified, but they were not to come from those people who without religious fanaticism had set out to improve their needy lot. The attacks, the expansion, the occupation of territories would be continued by former Christians or Zoroastrian populations of Asia and Africa, who had exchanged their faith for the new monotheistic creed of Mohammed. But with a difference,

[643] Amantos, History etc., I, 621.
[644] Finlay, A History of Greece, I, 352.

for now the new creed would be accompanied by an incredible religious fanaticism for which they, the former Christians, were distinguished.

In this century Byzantium was not only suffering radical and basic changes in its structure but also was undergoing identical dangers with those that had brought about the collapse of the Western Roman Empire.[645] The fact that the Empire was able to survive those dangers for many centuries to come was due primarily to its more or less homogeneous population that it was beginning to acquire precisely at that time.

I.

In the West, Byzantium had no longer maintained close ties with the fragmented and numerous Frankish states that had emerged in the vast areas between the Atlantic and the frontiers of Saxony. Very little is known of these states in this period. The only certainty is that no official break had occurred between the Empire and the Frankish states. Unfortunately, what little information is supplied by the West concerning relationships between the two is completely misleading. As Guizot[646] had written, the West was during the 7th Century totally ignorant of events in the East. Vague narratives, oftentimes distorted by an abysmal ignorance or unbridled imagination, would reach them.

Byzantine diplomacy which was so very active during the dangerous period of the great Avar expansion,[647] would, I presume, following the recession of the Avar danger, thanks to imperial diplomacy, have ceased concerning itself with the problem and would have ceased to distribute generous tribute monies to the Frankish states bordering on the Avar nation.

After the repeated reverses it had suffered, the Avar Empire understandably lost much of its former power. Yet enough of its power remained to still constitute a threat to central Europe. But it no longer had a common frontier with Byzantium. The policy of the latter had been very successful. The settlement of Croatian and Serbian tribes in the northern Balkan peninsula provided a buffer

[645] Diehl, Le Monde Oriental, p. 211.
[646] Frédégaire, ed. Guizot, p. 220, fn. 1.
[647] See Chapter XXII, Volume I, of the present History.

acting as a new security for Byzantium, and for a considerable period the Empire was to have relative peace in the area. The Avar Empire which was composed not of one nationality but of many tribes subjected to the Avar ruling class was destined inevitably to disintregrate and disappear in some two centuries.

In Italy the Empire did not recover those territories occupied by the Lombards. I will describe the struggles between Byzantium and the Lombards in another book.

The continuous wars of the Byzantines against the Persians and then against the Arabs prevented the strengthening of the Exarchate to such a point that it would be able to withstand the Lombards and impose itself upon the barbarian invaders. This accounted for the fact that when the Lombards became an even greater menace in subsequent years, the Popes were forced to turn elsewhere for assistance. This change in policy of the papacy was due not only to continuous friction with Constantinople, the inability of the latter to provide help against the Lombards, and its tendencies to seek independence from imperial authority, but was a natural development arising from the growing impotence of Byzantium in the area.[648]

The army of the Exarchate in the early stages consisted of Greek and barbarian elements. It was sent hither for the most part from Constantinople. But in time, not having, or unable to spare forces for the Exarchate, the Emperor sent funds with which an army could be raised in the territory. But the army so recruited consisted entirely of native or barbarian levies, and inevitably this army, not having close ties with Byzantium, would feel more closely bound to the Exarchs and the local officials than to a distant emperor. This understandably led to more ambitious Exarchs breaking away from the central authority and forming an independent or semi-independent state free of Byzantine controls.

In the meantime, Sicily and the provinces of southern Italy under Byzantine control were becoming more Hellenized.[649] Yet the cleavage between Italy and Byzantium continued to grow ever larger.[650] Up until the death of Pope Honorius, the relationships between Constantinople and Rome were normal, but when Severinus ascend-

[648] Lemerle, Les répercussions de la crise de l'Empire etc.
[649] Romano, La Dominazione etc., p. 297.
[650] Lot-Ganshof-Pfister, Les Destinées de l'Empire etc., p. 219.

ed the throne of St. Peter these relationships began to deteriorate dangerously.

The situation in Africa had not changed. With the appearance of the Arabs in Egypt, Mediterranean Africa began, I am convinced, to feel uneasy. But Egypt had not yet surrendered. Small but determined garrisons protected the vast province of Africa facing Egypt. In the meanwhile thousands of people from all walks of life and of all religions fled to the then wealthy and prosperous regions of the continent to escape the Arab threat. The wealth of these territories greatly impressed Arab geographers. Noweiri, for example, records that between Tripoli and Tangiers the land was densely populated and resembled a vast garden.

The native populations were peaceful but the limitation of imperial funds resulting from the policy of stringent economies which had been imposed had the same effects in Africa as in Syria. Imperial payments to the various tribal chieftains were diminished bringing with such policy a rise in discontent and a slackening of the bonds of friendship.[651]

The church of Africa was subject to Rome. It was inevitable therefore that when quarrels broke out between Rome and Constantinople, relationships between Africa and the imperial capital would suffer. This discord was further aggravated following the arrival of Maximus at Carthage.

The situation in Egypt was described in Chapter V. With the death of Heraclius, a large part of Egypt had fallen into the hands of the Arabs. But the largest part of Lower Egypt as well as Alexandria was still in the hands of the Byzantines. Heraclius had ordered a powerful fleet and army to be prepared to reinforce the defense of Egypt. Detachments of the military and naval forces were being concentrated in Rhodes.

Unfortunately, however, the animosity of the local Coptic population endangered the situation. A small sample of this feeling is provided by Michael the Syrian.[652] He states that he had discovered in the historical records that the Egyptians surrendered their country to the Arabs because they were persecuted by the Chalcedonians.[653]

[651] Diehl, L'Afrique Byzantine, p. 539.

[652] Michael the Syrian, II, 432, 433.

[653] Those who had accepted the canons as formulated at the Synod of Chalce-

2.

The situation in Asia was very discouraging for Byzantium. Persia was quickly disintegrating and falling into the hands of the Arab invaders. The waves of Arabs emerging from the peninsula, reinforced by the Arab tribes, both Christian and non-Christian, of Mesopotamia and Iraq, swept into the once mighty Persian Empire and occupied its territories piecemeal. The population was in the early stages indifferent but soon began openly to collaborate with the invader. Confronted by an emerging new dynamic power in Asia, Byzantium now stood alone.

Syria and Palestine were lost to the Empire. The final spasmodic efforts of Heraclius to stem the tide failed and these countries had definitively slipped from Byzantine control. Moreover, the natives, especially of Syria, now openly supported the Arabs. Their hatred of the Greeks was extreme. Bar Hebraeus records that "these Ismaelites conquered us by divine providence in the days of Heraclius and they freed us from the hands of the Greeks."[654] This animosity alone could explain the rapidity and ease with which the Arabs occupied these provinces. Undoubtedly the Empire was exhausted from all points of view, but particularly economically. If, however, the invaders had been confronted, as Gobineau emphasises, with populations closely allied to Byzantium by sentiment, and with military leaders able to make maximum use of the limited economic means which were still available in these areas, the invasions would have in all likelihood failed.

Mesopotamia, too, was gradually being occupied. As has been pointed out in Chapter IV, except for a few cities that resisted and were taken by assault, all the other cities and towns surrendered as soon as the Arabs appeared on the scene. The occupation of Mesopotamia had at all events been facilitated by the previous settlement of tribes that had come from neighbouring Arabia. These tribes had been converted to Christianity, but since Christianity had come to them from Syria, they were Jacobites (Monophysites) and consequently hostile to the Byzantines. Independently of this factor, however, with the disappearance of the Greek and Greek-speaking

don were known as Chalcedonians, hence the official church.

[654] Bar Hebraeus, Chronicon Ecclesiasticum, I, 274.

populations of the area, the Arabs who had come as migrants could occupy the richest estates.

Armenia had not yet been subjected to the Arab invasion. With the collapse of Persia, that part of the country formerly controlled by Persia with its capital at Dovin, was ruled more or less independently by an Armenian prince. Due to the great reputation that Byzantium possessed, the Armenians were attracted to the Empire and were, in a manner of speaking, under the direct protection of Constantinople. Ecclesiastical unity had been maintained until the death of Heraclius as this was formulated by the Synod of Theodosiopolis.[655] But soon enough reaction set in against the unity and grew more violent. The Armenians were to take advantage of the upheavals in Byzantium following the death of Heraclius to renounce ecclesiastical union.

Armenia always retained its language and its purely feudalistic structure. The various Armenian magnates were constantly warring one against the other. They were a very military people and in time of need could take refuge in the powerful fortresses built in inaccessible mountain fastnesses.[656] The country was a source for excellent fighters, and it was also a source for gold which accounted for the fierce rivalry existing between Byzantium and Persia who had struggled for many years for the control of the rich gold mines of the country.[657]

Asia Minor had not yet suffered an Arab invasion. The area was slowly recovering from the devastation caused by the periodical Persian invasions of the past years. As has been emphasized in the previous volume of this history, Asia Minor with its nearly homogenous and hellenized population constituted the heart and soul of the Empire.[658]

With the advance of the Arabs into Syria and Mesopotamia, many Greek-speaking inhabitants of these territories abandoned their homes to migrate to regions of the Empire that were not threatened. Many of these refugees most probably settled in Asia Minor[659] to which they gave an even more Greek character. To Asia Minor

[655] See Volume I, Chapter XX.
[656] Laurent, L'Arménie, etc., p. 2.
[657] Jenkins, Byzantium, etc., p. 18.
[658] Ostrogorsky, The Byzantine Empire etc.
[659] Charanis, Ethnic Changes etc.

also many Armenians fled, especially from the time when the Arabs began to penetrate their country and when the civil strife amongst the Armenian potentates themselves made life intolerable in the area.

The imperial government always kept the main road network of Asia Minor in a constant state of good repair. The free movement of goods and trade activity in Anatolia in general was thus facilitated.

This homogeneity of population enabled Byzantium to defend Asia Minor. Supported by the inhabitants who had the same faith and more or less the same nationality, the numerous incursions and attempts to invade the area on the part of the Arabs or the Arabized Syrians were repulsed and Asia Minor for long remained an integral part of the Empire.[660]

3.

It is indeed very difficult to obtain even the faintest picture of conditions in the Balkan peninsula for this period. The absence of sources, contemporary or reliable, with the resultant lack of information is enough to make problematical the verification of events that had occurred in this part of the world. Later sources, unfortunately most of which were ecclesiastical and reflect not history as such but the needs of the church, such, for example, as the miracles performed by saints, have confused the picture even more. If one were to add the political coloration of some contemporary schools of thought, then one can well understand why the situation in the Balkan peninsula in the first half of the 7th Century becomes so difficult to reconstruct even at present.

No attempt will be made in this chapter to explain whether some sources are, in my opinion, reliable or no. I shall attempt to give only an improvised picture, but will return to the subject in greater detail when dealing with the campaigns of Constantine III and his march to Corinth.

Chapter XXII of Volume I of this history describes the movement of the Slavs into the northern areas of the Balkans, the invasions of the Avaro-Slavs, and the settlement of the Croats and Serbs in

[660] Amantos, op. cit., I, 621.

Byzantine territory with the aid of the imperial army.

Thus, towards the end of the reign of Heraclius, the Byzantines had recovered the greater part of the peninsula and a general with a strong detachment had been installed in Singidunum, in what is now Belgrade.[661] Numbers of Croat and Serbian tribes had settled, after bitter struggles with the Avars, in the area between the frontiers of Dyrrachium and the river Drava. They managed to subdue all the Slavonic tribes that had been settled there by the Avars. They henceforth constituted a strong barrier between Byzantium and the Avar Empire, and from this time forward no Avar attack against the Empire was to take place.

The eastern part of the northern Balkans had also suffered great incursions by the Hunnish and Slavonic tribes. Along the entire length of the Danube Justinian had built a chain of strong fortresses that guarded the frontier from invasions from the north. In the age of Maurice and for many years thereafter the entire area in what is now southern Romania and northern Bulgaria was a battleground between the Byzantines and the Avaro-Slavs. It is maintained however that no permanent settlement of Slavs had taken place in southern Romania before the end of the 6th and the beginning of the 7th Century.[662]

During the 7th Century various Slavic tribes, taking advantage of the turbulent situation existing in the capital, began to penetrate peacefully and to settle in the depopulated and deserted territories.[663] Some towns in the interior had been pillaged but all those cities with strong garrisons or that were situated on the coast remained under Byzantine control. It is inaccurate to maintain that there was no organized Byzantine force at the time in the Balkan peninsula.[664]

Independently of the recovery of the entire area as far as the Danube on the basis of the narrative of Constantine Porphyrogenitus, it would have been relatively easy for Byzantium, immediately following the termination of the Persian war to reoccupy these areas of the Balkans with small forces of the civil guard or militia. The campaign to recover the Eastern provinces had lasted

[661] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De. Adm. Imp., Ch. 32.
[662] Ion Nestor, L'Etablissement des Slaves en Roumanie etc.
[663] Lemerle, Les repercussions etc.
[664] Ostrogorsky, The Byzantine Empire in the World of the Seventh Century.

many years. How is it conceivable in the period when the Empire faced no other danger that it should abandon these territories to the mercy of foreign conquerors, abandon the population to its fate, with the result, as some scholars maintain, that the Greek element disappeared completely from the area. By what reasoning did they send forces to reoccupy only Singidunum (Belgrade)?

The tribes that infiltrated and settled in the area did so initially by peaceful means and became for the most part subject to the local administration. These were nomadic tribes seeking new lands in which to live at peace and in security far from the war-like Huns, Bulgars, Avars and Turks. The latter aggressive tribes had devastated and laid waste extensive stretches of country and very understandably Byzantium welcomed the influx of a peace-like population that would colonize the deserted areas.

Various Slavic tribes had settled round Thessaloniki and in areas of central Greece. We know of this only from hagiographic accounts, and we know also that the authors of saints' lives were not overly concerned with historical accuracy. They strove to show that all events had come about through the intervention of St. Demetrius.

At all events, we know that five tribes, among which the Dragoubites, occupied the lands round the Macedonian capital. Others included the Sagoudites of whom some question arises concerning their Slavic origin. Still other tribes settled in Demetrias and in the Rhodope region.[665]

One thing is certain, however. There was not a more obscure period in the Balkan peninsula than that of the 7th Century.[666]

It is very difficult to visualize the actual conditions existing during that period in the southern Balkan peninsula, especially in central Greece and the Peloponnese. Various reports of church metropolitans, chronicles of monastic establishments or of metropolitan sees obscure the picture even further. All strove to prove that they had certain rights and privileges because they had suffered so much at the hands of the barbarians who, depending upon their needs, were reported to be Huns, or Avars, or Bulgars, and at other times Slavs.

No doubt remains that following the Avar-Bulgar-Slav invasions towards the end of the 6th Century, this area which had suffered

[665] Jirecek, Geschichte der Serben, I, 94; Lemerle, Invasions etc.
[666] Charanis, On the Capture of Corinth etc.

much devastation and depopulation appears to have been completely overlooked by the historical records.

There exist many letters of Pope Gregory addressed to the Metropolitan of Corinth[667] in which no mention whatsoever is made of the reported occupation of Greece or the Peloponnese. These letters were written in 591, 593 and 595.[668] The Pope addresses the Bishop of Corinth as "Universus episcopo, per Helladiam provinciam." There is also extant a letter of the same Pope to his legate, the Metropolitan of Thessaloniki, concerning the Bishops of Dyrrachium, Nicopolis, Larissa, and so on.[669] Pope Honorius also addressed a letter to the Bishops of Epirus.[670] But none of these letters makes any reference or gives any hint of the occupation of these territories by barbarian tribes.

Undoubtedly in the first quarter of the 7th Century various lesser or greater invasions had occurred. Taking advantage of the dissolution of the central government in the reign of Phocas and the absence of strong imperial forces in this area, the invaders undertook marauding incursions, but it is significant that *not a single city or large town was occupied.*

It is very probable that several infiltrations by nomadic Slavic tribes had taken place in depopulated or deserted areas. In view of the fact that no chronicler makes mention of such movements during this period, it is quite likely that these settlements created problems only at the local level[671] and concerned only the local administrators. The fact remains that the Greek population neither disappeared nor was subjected by the invading Slavs. Proof of this is provided by the rapid absorption of the invaders or the peacefully settled colonists by the indigenous population of Greece.[672]

Many scholars have attempted to give a false picture of the situation then existing on the basis of the rarety or lack of coins minted

[667] Corinth as well as the whole of Illyricum was then under the ecclesiastical jurisdiction of the Pope.

[668] Jaffé-Wattenbach, Regesta etc., under nos. 1095, 1243, 1373 and 1379; Dölger, in review of article by K. Setton; Zakythinos, The Slavs in Greece, p. 45.

[669] Jaffé-Wattenbach, No. 1683.

[670] Migne, P.L., LXXX, p. 478.

[671] Lemerle, La Chronique etc.

[672] Rambaud, L'Empire Grec etc., p. 231.

in this region. It is my view that the uncovering or the lack of discovery of treasures in the cities and countryside depends directly upon the habit of hoarding or saving, or upon the economic facility existing at one particular moment in this region or even upon the extent of excavations that have been made. Consequently, the discovery or no of treasures and specially coins, or the lack of coins, can in no respect be cited as proof for subjection or, for that matter, of the occupation by barbarians of that particular region or area.

Nevertheless, Corinth continued until the death of Heraclius to remain Byzantine and the Metropolitan see of Greece, and Athens the famous intellectual centre of the southern Balkan peninsula. Moreover, neither Argos, nor Nauplion, nor Patras, nor Thebes, nor Chalkis ceased to be Byzantine cities.[673]

But more about the matter in the next volume of this history. So much has been written on the problem that a broader study is called for on specific topics or in specific areas.

Before bringing the subject matter to a close, I would like to relate and to comment on a strange occurrence that took place in the years before the death of Heraclius.

In Chapter XXII of Volume I, I referred to an insurrection of the Bulgars in 635 (?) against the Avars. Information concerning this rebellion is very confusing and inevitably has caused much disagreement among historical scholars.

According to the Patriarch Nicephorus,[674] at this time (before Heraclius returned to Constantinople, hence 635/636), Kubrat, nephew of Organa, chief of the Hunogunduri,[675] rebelled against the Avars and expelled them from their "native land." He allied himself with Heraclius and maintained this friendship until the end. Heraclius sent him gifts and gave him the title of patricius. The information we have, supplemented by Theophanes,[676] concerns an

[673] Gregorovius, History of the city of Athens, p. 151; Finlay, Corinth in the Middle Ages.

[674] Nicephorus, p. 24.

[675] Hunogunduri, a variation of Honogurus. Hunnish race east of the lake of Maeotis (Sea of Azov). They are also referred to as Hutigurs. This is an ancient name for the Bulgars. Moravcsik, Byzantino-Turcica, II, 218, 219.

[676] Theophanes, p. 357. He calls him Crovates, king of Bulgaria and the Cotrigurs. The latter name is a corruption for the Bulgars. See Moravcsik, op. cit., p. 165.

insurrection of the Bulgars against their Avar masters. It is feasible that this revolt was yet another diplomatic success of the Byzantines in their effort to dissolve the Avar Empire from within.

John, Bishop of Nikiu,[677] says that Kubrat, the nephew of Organa, leader of the Huns, who had been baptized a Christian at Constantinople when he was yet a youth, supported Martina's faction against the army after the death of Heraclius and his son Constantine II (see Chapter X).

According to Fredegarius[678] "in that year" (?) great disturbances beset the kingdom of the Avars because both Avars and Bulgars claimed the throne. The Avars were victorious and expelled the Bulgars from Panonnia. 9,000 asked for refuge from Dagobertus, king of the Franks, who finally settled them in his kingdom.[679]

The Miracula of St. Demetrius[680] on the other hand record that 60 years after the "great sacking" (presumably plundering), the prisoners of the Avars "admixed" and soon became a numerous people. The Chagan of the Avars designated as their leader Kuber. But Kuber rebelled against the Avars and took with him all the numerous "Romans" who wished to return to their country together with "other pagans." After various battles they crossed the Danube and proceeded to "our parts," that is, to Thessaloniki. They settled in the plain of Keramesius. Kuber requested from the "king" that the Dragoubites (a Slavic tribe) be ordered to supply them with food. But many went to Thessaloniki itself. This incident has further ramifications which will be dealt with elsewhere.

Grégoire[681] identified the Kubratus of Nicephorus, the Kuver of the Miracula, the Kubratis of John of Nikiu and the founder of the Croat nation as one and the same person. His view was supported

[677] John Nikiu, ed. Zotenberg, p. 580.

[678] Chronicum quae dicuntur Fredegari etc., in Monumenta Germaniae Historica, Script. Merov., II, Ch. 72.

[679] Dagobert died in 639, hence this incident, if accurate, would have occurred before 639. The editor B. Krusch, fn. 3, p. 157, wrongfully dates it in 641.

[680] Migne, P.G., CXVI, p. 1361 ff.

[681] Grégoire, L'Origine et le nom des Croates etc.

by others among whom Kenneth Setton,[682] Lemerle,[683] Pernice,[684] Ouspensky[685] and Tafrali.[686]

Scholars disagreeing with such identification include Ostrogorsky,[687] Charanis,[688] Maricq,[689] Besevliev,[690] Moravcsik[691] and Zlatarski among others.

I confess I cannot understand why such identification is made when it had been already rejected by the first to edit the Miracula of St. Demetrius, Cornelius Byé. Was the similarity of names really sufficient evidence for this identity?

It is my impression that two entirely different events are involved. One concerns the rebellion of Bulgars who dwelt near the Maeotis lake under their leader Kubrat (Nicephorus) or Krobat (Theophanes). It is very probable that both are one and the same person who was baptized by Heraclius in the capital in 619.[692] It was customary for the Emperor to grant some such title as patricius[693] to a ruler of a nation which was in all probability stirred to rebellion by Byzantine diplomacy and with whom Heraclius had allied himself. But it was not the custom to grant such a title to the leader of insurrectionary groups. At all events, this name is recorded in the lists of the Bulgar kings, and the person is deemed the first of the independent rulers of that nation. He died in 642.

[682] Setton, The Bulgars in the Balkans, and the Emperor Constans etc. He relies on Niederle, Ouspenski and Grégoire, and maintains that after the death of Heraclius, Kuber took advantage of the ensuing disturbances in the capital, marched to the south and occupied Corinth.

[683] Lemerle, La composition et la Chronologie etc.; also Invasions et migrations etc. He argues that it is the same person and that the Keramesian plain is probably the modern plain of Monastir.

[684] Pernice, Sulla data del Libro II dei Miracula S. Demetrii Martyris, in Bessarione, VI, 1902.

[685] Ouspensky, History etc., I, 46, 47.

[686] Tafrali, Thessalonique etc., pp. 128-131.

[687] Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, pp. 93,94; also the Byzantine Empire etc. Ostrogorsky rejects the version of Grégoire.

[688] Charanis, Ethnic Changes etc.

[689] Maricq, Notes sur les Slaves etc.

[690] Besevliev, Zur Deutung und datierung usw.

[691] Moravcsik, op. cit., II, pp. 161 and 165.

[692] Nicephorus, p. 12; John Nikiu, p. 580.

[693] Kulakovski, Byzantine History, Vol. III, writes that in 636 the Byzantines made an alliance with Krubates, Khan (ruler) of the Bulgars of the Volga.

The second event concerns Kuber, leader of a mixed nation of people, Greeks, Bulgars, Greco-Bulgars and so on, who resided in Pannonia or Bessarabia. They had rebelled and eventually settled in the Monastir plain. With time, all traces of this Kuber disappear and no source again makes mention of him.[694] Irrespective of whether the information supplied by the Book of Miracles, since it is a hagiographical text, is correct or no, how can these two persons be recognized as the same? One was a leader, a king of the Bulgars dwelling near the Sea of Azov. The other was the leader of a rebellious group that had settled in Byzantine territory and had in fact requested that the Slavic tribes, hence subject to imperial control, be ordered to provide them with food.

These two events therefore have no relationship whatsoever one with the other. Hence we must distinguish Kuber of the Book of Miracles from Kubrat, king of the Bulgars, friend of Heraclius and presumably supporter of Martina and her sons.

4.

I have written briefly of the internal situation at this time in Byzantium in the previous chapter.

The dangers which the Empire had gone through during the Persian and Arab attacks added to the relatively able administration of Heraclius had cooled the passions of the factions in the capital. The Demes preoccupied themselves solely with their duties in the athletic meets and with the defense of the city as local militia in the event of impending danger. No disturbances or clashes whatsoever between the factions are recorded even through the final years of Heraclius's reign. Unfortunately, however, the demands of Martina, the hatred of the people and even of the members of the upper classes against her, were inevitably to lead to strife, disturbances and rebellion which the inhabitants, at least of the city, had completely forgotten. To these would be added later ecclesiastical disputes as well.

The exhaustion that Byzantium had suffered as a consequence of the many years of war was beyond belief. I have written at some length on the matter in previous chapters. It was not only confined to a depletion of human resources but to a deterioration in morale.

The new defeats suffered by the imperial armies and the new

[694] Charanis, Ethnic Changes etc.

dangers that had arisen with the attacks of the Arabs and their continued success was bound to exacerbate the situation even further.

The economic situation was no better. The economy of the Empire had not yet fully recovered from the blows it had suffered. Following the decision of Heraclius to return immediately all the monies that the State had borrowed from the Church, the collection of taxes became even more intolerable. The oppressive search for income from a society which had not yet fully recovered economically aggravated the situation even more. As a consequence, the circulation of gold coin diminished considerably, bringing in its wake unpleasant repercussions for trade and commerce of the Empire.[695]

During the entire war period Byzantium had lost many of its main sources of gold such as the mines of Armenia, of Egypt and so on. The Byzantines therefore were forced to turn to their own reserves and resources, to the Church etc. Moreover, they minted much copper coinage. It was only after the death of Heraclius and in the reign of his grandson Constantine III (Constans) that a diminution in the number of copper coins issued is observed with a parallel increase in the minting and circulation of gold solidi.[696]

In the reign of Heraclius the minting of gold and silver coins had improved in quality and technique. Before he assumed the throne the coins issued had been of very poor quality. In the same period the weight of the gold solidus was stabilized. This stability beginning with the period of Heraclius was to be maintained for more than three centuries. Despite this stability, some gold solidi were issued of a lighter weight in gold content and these were used for the most part for payment of the tribute monies or for the bribing of petty leaders and tribal chieftains. Usually they were mixed with coins containing the standard weight, that is, 4.40 to 4.50 grams, and of 24 carat gold.[698]

A large number of such coins, of light weight, were found in Hungary which was then the heart of the Avar Empire, and in Russia.[699] Most of these light-weight coins depicted Heraclius or the

[695] Lombard, L'Or Mussulman etc.
[696] Ostrogorsky, Byzantine Cities etc.
[697] Lopez, Byzantine Law etc.
[698] Runciman, Byzantine Trade etc., C.M.H., II, 115.
[699] Adelson, Light Weight Solidi etc., p. 24.

Emperor with his sons.[700] They appear to be part of the vast tribute monies paid to the Avars. It is believed that these coins were used primarily in the northern frontier areas and in the countries of the North.

The habit of minting light-weight coins ceased at the end of the 7th Century in the reign of Constantine IV.[701]

There is also the theory that because these coins bear a different mint mark they were not issued for deception or for counterfeit purposes.[702] This theory is odd indeed in that it does not explain for what other reason the lighter coins were issued and mixed with coins of standard weight.

Such, then, was the economic and monetary condition of the Empire at the time of Heraclius's death.

5.

Before bringing this chapter to a close, ending with the death of Heraclius I, I shall give a brief survey of the accomplishments of that Emperor. Despite the difficulties in attempting to make such a brief summary, it is I believe necessary because the period covering the reign of Heraclius is one of the most significant in the history of the Byzantine Empire.

When the young Heraclius arrived in Constantinople in October of 610, he was confronted with a situation of unprecedented anarchy and collapse. He strove with what means were at hand to bring some order out of the chaos. The first and primary objective was to halt the Persian advance. The Persians had begun to occupy the most productive and wealthiest territories of the Empire. But the means at hand were insufficient and perhaps were used rather hastily and without proper forethought. Heraclius initially failed to hold the Persians, just as he had failed in his efforts to reach some agreement with the second formidable enemy of Byzantium, the Empire of the Avars.

One of the main reasons for the failure of Heraclius was the fall in morale of the population. The disillusionment and the unwillingness of the inhabitants to serve in the army and especially to fight

[700] Stefan, Münzkunde des Altertum.
[701] Adelson, op. cit., p. 21.
[702] Kent, Review of Adelson etc.

the enemies of the Empire were phonomena which had appeared in the period before Heraclius assumed the imperial throne. People preferred to find refuge in the monasteries where they were free of any obligations to the State. This mass movement to the monastic institutions forced Maurice to take severe measures which brought him the enmity of Pope Gregorius. After the murder of Maurice and in the reign of Phocas when the chaos had reached its peak (see Volume I of this history), the situation assumed proportions of complete disintegration. A verse from Pisides provides a succinct picture of the morale of the Byzantines during that period. Soon after the first victory of the imperial army over the Persians, in February of 623, he writes,[703] "those who before could not bear even the sight of the dust of the Persians." A few lines later the same author writes,[704] "who could dream that the Romans (i.e. the Byzantines) could ever defeat the Persians." These two verses alone suffice to reflect the disillusionment, the complete lack of morale that had taken hold of Byzantium and the fear caused by the Persians. It was difficult to overcome this universal state of moral decay.

The social and the economic problems also appeared insurmountable to Heraclius. The growing power of the aristocracy oftentimes forced him to compromise with it. Gradually small landowners began to disappear and the entire social structure of Byzantium appeared to be based on a covetous and unrestrained aristocracy, and on an administrative machinery that was rife with corruption.

Financial means were more or less non-existent. Heraclius was forced to mint coins that had half the nominal value, thus reducing salaries by half. The only coin that was not tampered with was the gold solidus. On the contrary, in the reign of Heraclius, the severest penalties were imposed on those who tampered with the coinage.[705] This of course conflicts with the policy of minting light-weight coins, but this alone would indicate that the issue of these coins was made by the State for a set purpose. Understandably, the minting of gold coins and their circulation during the early period of the reign of Heraclius had diminished markedly. But this was to be expected, for as has been already pointed out, Byzantium had lost its markets

[703] Pisides, Exp. Pers., III, 281, 282.

[704] Pisides, op. cit., III, 296, 297.

[705] Lopez, Byzantine Law etc.

for gold purchases in the East or lost control of the routes through which the gold was received. Moreover, a great hoarding of gold on the part of the Church either in the form of coin or objects (such as devotional offerings, etc.) had become the custom.[706]

The gesture of the Patriarch Sergius in putting at the disposal of Heraclius the treasures of the Church saved the situation. In the previous volume I pointed out how Sergius was condemned for an action which in fact proved to be the salvation of the Empire.

With sufficient means now at hand, Heraclius could proceed methodically, with great patience and greater energy, to prepare that agent which would assure him of final victory, the imperial army.

When all was set, Heraclius, with the blessing of the Church, set out at the head of his army to strike against the eternal foe of Hellenism, against Persia, which had become a mortal threat to the very existence of Byzantium.

After the first decisive battle he may perhaps have been in the position to terminate the war in the middle of 623 had not a new threat arisen with the invasion of the Avars forcing Heraclius to bring his campaign to a halt and hasten back to Constantinople.

In 624 we find him resuming the interrupted campaign against the Persians. He proved himself a brave soldier and a good general in the field. But a certain lack of resolution and severe strategic blunders prolonged the war. This prolongation of the campaign inevitably caused a further drain on the treasury in both men and materials.

But he brought the war to an end triumphantly with complete victory over the Persians. He had reconquered the rich Eastern provinces and attained some semblance of unity in the Empire. As Hussey so succinctly describes it, Heraclius saved the Empire by using cleverly whatever means he had available.[707]

With great determination he also tried to bring about a spiritual unity to the Empire by avoiding religious dissension and striving to supplant the lack of a uniform nationality with a single uniform faith. Had he succeeded in this policy, then perhaps there would have been created a determination on the part of the populations of the Eastern provinces to resist the new invaders from the South.

[706] Lombard, L'Or Mussulman etc.

[707] Hussey, Le Monde de Byzance, p. 27.

But this appears to have been too long in coming, for the hatred of the peoples in those provinces for anything Greek or Roman had become insurmountable.

Heraclius also attempted to eliminate another evil in the Empire by reorganizing the imperial administration on a new basis. With the formation of the first Themes, with the granting of free lands to the military, with the encouragement of small holders of land, he succeeded in creating the beginnings of a free class of small landowners which enabled the Empire not only to survive but to recover its basic strength.[708]

The Emperor reorganized the guilds. This was to have considerable repercussions on the economic life of the cities of the Empire.[709]

He also concerned himself with the reorganization of the University of Constantinople. Heraclius was a cultivated person and he had wanted the capital to possess a good center for higher studies. The Ecumenical School which had been founded during Constantine the Great's reign and again set up by Theodosius II had been completely ignored in the reign of Phocas. According to Theophylactus Simocattes (History, ed. de Boor), the University was reorganized by Heraclius.[710] He invited from Alexandria the philosopher and mathematician Stephanus to whom he gave the title "The Great Master," or "Ecumenical Teacher" to teach Philosophy, Astronomy, Geometry, Arithmetic and Music.[711]

Such were the main contributions of Heraclius. Unfortunately, however, he committed a series of fundamental blunders which were financially to prove one of the main reasons for the ensuing catastrophe. He wished to return all the monies he had borrowed from the Church, and to do this as soon as possible. But since all the funds were not immediately available, he pressed for more taxation from the population, particularly of the Eastern regions and ordered that all taxes forthcoming were to be collected without fail. Concerning this policy, I have written in Volume I. Such action on the part of the Emperor had unfortunate consequences for the Empire.

[708] Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine etc., p. 86; Charanis, Some Remarks etc.

[709] Lopez, The Role of Trade etc.

[710] Dvornik, Photius et la réorganisation etc.; Bréhier, La Civilisation Byzantine, p. 461; Fuchs, Die Höheren Schulen usw.

[711] Bréhier, op. cit., p. 462; Schemmel, Die Hochschule usw.

Firstly it enraged the populations of the provinces which had only recently been reconquered, and secondly at the moment when funds were required for the new threat that had arisen, they were not available. Yet another basic mistake was the dissolution of the army which had been the instrument of the great victory over the enemies of Byzantium. No apparent threat existed to the Empire at this stage. As was pointed out no one could possibly believe that the so-called "robbers of the desert" were to become a serious threat. For reasons of economy, therefore, Heraclius dissolved the army and retained only the local militia.

Another blunder was the delay in the reorganization of the administration. This delay was also due to reasons of economy and the need to repay the loan to the Church. These short-sighted measures proved to be disastrous for Byzantium.

Heraclius was in the Eastern provinces (Edessa, Emesos, Antioch) when the first invasion of the Arabs took place. He tried resolutely and stubbornly to impose what he believed was a conciliatory formula for the peace of the Church.

Heraclius was then 60, a very advanced age for the period. He was run down and troubled by illness. Despite his condition, and his age, and although he underestimated the immediate danger to which the Empire was exposed, he applied superhuman effort to meet the new situation. He possessed no army to speak of, there was an era of peace and the army had been dissolved since no apparent enemy threatened the Empire. He was without funds, for the immediate return of the Church loan had absorbed whatever had been available. Several historians condemn the policies and attitude of Heraclius, accusing him of cowardice, and maintain that after his brilliant victory, he again returned to a state of indifference and torpidity.[712] But I cannot agree with such a point of view. Heraclius did all in his power to assemble two armies, regardless of their quality or their military worth. That he did not lead them in person does not mean that he fell into a torpor. Besides his age, Heraclius in my opinion would not under any circumstances have deemed it fitting or respectable, as the Emperor of the greatest and only existing civilized Empire of the then known world, to lead a policing action

[712] Paparrigopoulos, History etc., III, 217; Guilland, L'Empire Byzantin, p. 144.

against the "robbers of the desert." As was pointed out in Chapter VI, the Byzantines were unacquainted with the momentous internal changes that had occurred in Arabia, nor could they have believed that a prolonged or even grand razzia would not be overcome by mere policing measures. And moreover, no one, neither Byzantine nor Arab, could expect that the razzia would become an out and out conquest.

It is true that Heraclius was no longer the youthful Emperor he had once been. Of an advanced age, plagued by a serious ailment, he could not possibly have had the same drive and determination. And it is most natural that following the reverse at Yarmuk, when he was confronted with the defeat and the dissolution of his armies and the ever-growing antagonism of the indigenous populations, that he should lose his courage and be overcome by disillusionment. He bore witness to the collapse of his lifetime work to which he had devoted the years of his youth and his health, and to a reverse in fortune of such magnitude that he could no longer hope to redress. Such an unexpected reversal of fortune would understandably break his will to resist.

At the end of Volume I, I wrote that had Heraclius died in 630, he would have gone down in history as one of the foremost emperors. I was criticized for making such a claim. And yet, to confront the new attack of Asia which had just begun, another man was needed. Heraclius, worn down by age and illness, could not possibly begin anew, for a second time, what he had accomplished 20 years before. Rarely can one be expected to make superhuman efforts a second time to rebuild an Empire that is on the verge of collapse. Funds had to be found again, a new army had to be organized and he had to spear-head the effort, and this at an advanced age, and to what end? To recover provinces in which the populations were hostile to the Byzantines and now openly collaborated with the new enemies.

A new orientation had taken place in the era of Heraclius. The supposed Roman period now ended and actual Byzantine history began.[713] The Greek race, freed from its formal bonds and now within its natural limitations, began to develop and to give to the Empire a new stimulation and a new breath of life.

The reign of Heraclius terminates the first Byzantine period of

[713] Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 95.

the ecumenical power which did not recognize the existence of any other civilization or any other State save its own, the one and only Roman Empire.[714]

Heraclius was indeed a strange personage. He had many weaknesses but at the same time many merits. Despite the destruction of his work and despite his illness which had forced him to all but withdraw from public life, his image as a brave and undaunted ruler and soldier still remains as bright as ever. Thanks to him and the measures that were being applied for the first time during his reign, Byzantium was able to survive, for the situation had suddenly become dangerous and threatening for the Empire. Opposite Byzantium there began to arise a new Empire, young and dynamic. Byzantium was left to confront a united Asia alone.

[714] Stein, Introduction à l'histoire etc.

CHAPTER IX

CONSTANTINE II

The death of Heraclius was followed by a period rife with problems both external and internal. The two sons of Heraclius who succeeded the late Emperor gave no indication or had no chance of giving indications of their ability to rule the troubled Empire. Byzantium was then confronted by both external enemies, specially the perilous Arab danger, and internal upheavals that threatened to disrupt the State. The internal situation had returned to normal with the arrival of Heraclius I on the scene and during most of his reign, but shortly before his death the disruptive forces again emerged. But these forces were mitigated by the early removal from the throne of the children of the late Emperor and the growing mortal threat from the East.

Although they were at war with each other over long periods, Byzantium and Persia, the two Empires in the then known world, were accustomed to confront the common enemy from the depths of Asia together, and in most cases Persia alone constituted a barrier against the influx of enemies from the East.

But with the disappearance of Persia, Byzantium was left on its own to oppose Asia. Here indeed was an unprecedented danger which grew ever more menacingly because the forces of Asia were slowly gathering for the grand assault on Byzantium.

Heraclius left a legacy for his successors that was rife with danger. Besides the threat from Asia, he had left unresolved the delicate religious problem which resulted in grave deterioration of relationships with the West.

In the following two chapters which bring this volume to a close, I shall attempt to give a picture of the reign of the two sons of Heraclius and the difficult moments Byzantium underwent during this very brief period.

I.

Heraclius left a will and testament by which his sons Constantine and Heraclius were to reign jointly as co-Emperors, and his wife Martina was to be honoured by them as mother and Empress.[715] John of Nikiu records[716] that shortly before Heraclius had died he had minted a solidus on which he was depicted with his two sons. There was on the coin space allotted for Martina as well. We know that coins were issued after 638 which show him with his sons and that other solidi exist depicting him with Constantine and Martina,[717] but I am not aware if any of the coins mentioned by John of Nikiu have been found.

Constantine, or Heraclius Flavius the "new" Constantine, was then about $28^1/_2$ years of age, having already reigned as co-Emperor since 613 (or the end of 612).[718] Heraclius II, commonly known to later chroniclers as Heracleonas, was then only 15 and had been co-Emperor since 638.

As it has been suggested,[719] Heraclius I succumbed to the pressures of Martina and designated as co-Emperor their "illegitimate" son Heraclius II. As has been written in Chapter VII, this is most probably the case since it would have been difficult for the aged and ailing Heraclius to oppose the wishes of a young wife of whom he was extremely fond. But I do not believe that it was only Martina's wish that persuaded Heraclius to make his decision. As will be pointed out in the ensuing paragraphs, his first-born son Constantine was of frail health and there existed the danger, in view of the lack of any rules of succession in the event of his death, that the throne would remain vacant and perhaps be lost to their line forever.

He of course knew that Constantine would reign, and this is evident in the oath which Heraclius made the young co-Emperor take to the effect that he promise to recall from exile all those whom he, Heraclius, had sent into exile and particularly those whom he

[715] Nicephorus, p. 27.
[716] John Nikiu, p. 563.
[717] Goodacre, A Handbook of the Coinage etc., pp. 98 ff.
[718] See Chapter VI, Volume I. There is a conflict in the sources and consequently disagreement among contemporary scholars.
[719] Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, p. 100; Bury, History of the Later etc., II, 282.

had punished with banishment on the grounds of involvement in the plot against him.

It should be noted that the heir to the throne customarily bore the title of Caesar and only in the event of imminent death of the emperor was he given the supreme imperial title.[720]

Martina was not content with the rights given to her in the will of Heraclius. According to Nicephorus, she summoned the Patriach Pyrrhus, the Senate, and other members of the ruling aristocracy together with the Demes to the Hippodrome. There she unfolded the testament of Heraclius and asked to be recognized as Empress. She had wished to assume authority herself.[721] In such manner, her position would have acquired a constitutional status. Therefore she would have the first rank in the Empire.[722]

But her demand straightway roused the wrath of the populace who began to shout in support of the two co-Emperors. "Some of the people," according to the sources, cried out that "she" would be honoured only as the mother of the Emperors, but the sole monarchs and rulers were Constantine and Heraclius. On the basis of what the sources record, it is said that Martina, since she was a woman, could not possibly receive embassies of barbarians and conduct negotiations with them, and the people expressed their feelings in no uncertain terms, "May God never will that the Roman State reach such a degrading point." In other words, they deemed that it would be degrading for the Empire if a woman were to lead it. Finally the populace went yet even further in its demands by acclaiming Constantine as the dominant sovereign. And this was understandable, for he had been crowned Emperor many years before by the young Heraclius. The difference in age and the affection of the people for Constantine also played a role in their support for him. But most of all, for years, when Heraclius had been absent from the capital, Constantine himself had used his royal prerogatives and the populace had become accustomed to him.

The outcry against Martina was indeed of unexpected vehemence arising from her unusual demands for power. The antipathy especial-

[720] Christofilopoulou, Selection, Proclamation etc., p. 70.

[721] Lambros, History of Greece, V, 720.

[722] Nicephorus, pp. 27–28; Manojlovic-Grégoire, Le peuple etc.; Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 100.

ly amongst the people which she had roused was of great intensity. Confronted by such violent reaction, she withdrew to the palace while the populace outside continued to acclaim the two monarchs. Here again the people played a primary role. Had the situation gotten out of hand, there existed the danger that the Demes or factions would once again regain their former power and shed much blood in the capital.[723] Gradually Martina was forced to surrender all power which became centred in Constantine alone.[724]

2.

It is difficult to understand why Constantine, the son of Heraclius I, has been designated as the third to bear that name by contemporary historians, because after Constantine the Great, no other emperor of Byzantium bore the name. The son of the first Constantine, who was also a Constantine, ruled his portion, the Western half of the Empire, after the death of his father on the basis of the latter's will. Consequently, he was never Emperor of Byzantium.[725] The confusing mass of names of the successors of Heraclius has been further complicated by the number of descendants (sons, grandsons, etc.) who carried the name of Heraclius or Constantine. To these were attached certain surnames which later chroniclers used in order to distinguish the one from the other.

Constantine, who was of unstable character, suffered from a chronic ailment as a result of which he required constant treatment,[726] and because of the illness no one could absolutely rely upon him. He suffered from tuberculosis which appears to have reached an advanced stage, and for this reason he constantly sought an environment more suitable for the ailment. He resided in the environs of Chalcedon where he had built a palace. His mother Eudocia or

[723] Bratinau, La fin du régime des parties etc.

[724] Brooks, in C.M.H., II, 391.

[725] Vasiliev, Histoire de l'Empire etc. and Amantos, History etc., in their tables do not list the son of Constantine the Great among the emperors of Byzantium. Ostrogorsky refers to him as an emperor of the West. Stein, Histoire du bas-Empire, Vol. I, while writing that he was emperor only of the Western part of the Empire, nevertheless designates him as Constantine II.

[726] Nicephorus, p. 28; Cedrenus, p. 753; Leo the Grammarian, p. 156; Theodosius of Melitene, p. 107.

Fabia was an epileptic who died a few years after becoming Empress.[727] This sickness was passed on in part to her offspring in the form of a hereditary disease which affected the health and mental condition of all of them. All her descendants died young as a result of illness or murder. The fact that some were murdered is again directly related to the abnormality of character which in turn was caused by the hereditary disease.

Constantine had in 629 married his cousin Gregoria, daughter of Nicetas.[728] From this marriage they had two sons known to us, Heraclius, who was born in November of 630 and was christened by his uncle Heraclius (i.e. Heracleonas),[729] and Theodosius of whom the date of birth is unknown.

Constantine enjoyed much popularity in Constantinople especially from the time of the Avar-Persian attack in 626. He had able ministers to serve him and if he had lived longer he may well have become a good Emperor of Byzantium. The state of affairs was certainly not ideal, Egypt was in danger of being lost, in Syria and Mesopotamia a new power was emerging which threatened the existence of the Empire. The West was on the verge of rebellion because of hostility to the religious policy that Heraclius had supported, and the treasury was empty.

Cedrenus and other chroniclers record a very macabre incident which is indicative of the desperate financial straits of the Empire at the time of Constantine. The Emperor ordered that the tomb of his father be opened and the crown with which he had been interred, made of 70 pounds of gold, be removed. This was executed by the cubicularius Callinicus "bewailing and lamenting."

Fearing lest the hatred against Martina would lead to her removal from the palace, and that Constantine would proscribe her position, Heraclius shortly before his death confided a large sum of money to the Patriarch Pyrrhus which could be used on her behalf in the event of need. From this information can be deduced the fact that Heraclius was deeply concerned about the future of Martina and

[727] See Volume I of the present History.

[728] Nicetas was first cousin to Heraclius who was very instrumental in his ascendancy to the throne. He served as Imperial Governor of Egypt and then Exarch of Africa.

[729] Bréhier, La nouvelle crise religieuse, in Fliche et Martin, V, 107.

her relationships with Constantine of whom she was stepmother and first cousin, and with whom she was not on harmonious terms.

At the instigation of Philagrius, the cubicularius and treasurer of the royal monies,[730] Constantine asked for the return of the special fund set aside for Martina, and Pyrrhus surrendered this to him.[731]

The health of the Emperor got progressively worse. Philagrius, who appears to have been one of his chief advisors, upon seeing the rapid decline in Constantine's health, feared that his death was near. Whether he believed it or no, Philagrius began spreading rumours to the effect that the deterioration of the Emperor's health was due to poison administered by Martina and Heraclius II. He was naturally concerned greatly as to the succession in the event of Constantine's sudden death. Such being the case, he advised Constantine to write to the army to guard over his children and to protect their rights to succession should he die. According to the Patriarch Nicephorus, Constantine gave Valentinus, adjutant of Philagrius, the sum of 50,000 gold coins and then another 16,000 to distribute to the army in order that after his death, Martina and her children would be removed from power and his own children would succeed him.[732] I do not believe this information to be entirely factual. Constantine wished to have the rights of his offspring assured. It is not possible that he could reject his father's wishes as contained in the will, because if he did so desire, he easily enough could have disowned his brothers when he was the reigning monarch. We should remember the hatred of the populace for Martina and the rumours that her children were not legitimate because they came of a forbidden marriage. Consequently, their replacement was not a difficult matter for Constantine, if he so desired.

Valentinus emerges later on the scene as commander of the army of the East,[733] and it appears that he was appointed to the post by Constantine himself. He was an Armenian who probably served formerly as adjutant to Philagrius, but since he is also mentioned by the Patriarch Nicephorus a few weeks or months later as generalissimo of the army of Asia Minor, I would tend to accept the evidence of Sébéos as accurate. To Valentinus, confidant of both Constantine

[730] Sathas, Anonymous Synopsis, p. 110.
[731] Nicephorus, p. 28.
[732] Nicephorus, pp. 28–29.
[733] Sébéos, p. 103; Caetani, Annali, IV, 344.

and Philagrius, was confided the money by which through the army the children of Constantine would be guarded against any attempts on the part of Martina to usurp the power. This is in my view a correct interpretation of the incident on the basis of the extant sources. Constantine did not wish to dethrone his brother. He wanted only to safeguard the succession of his sons.[734]

Constantine continued with preparations for the strengthening of the defense of Alexandria. The army and fleet were being prepared in Rhodes for the purpose. Informed of the quarrels of the higher command in Alexandria, he recalled Theodore, Dux of Egypt, and left Anastasius, the Augustalius of the province, to lead the defensive operations.[735]

Constantine died before (?) he could fulfil the promise he gave to his father concerning the exiles,[736] since it is recorded that they were recalled from banishment by his son. Only the recall from exile of the Patriarch of Alexandria Cyrus is debated as to whether it was made by Constantine or by Heraclius II at the instigation of Martina. Most probably Cyrus returned after orders from Constantine because we find him after a brief space of time, almost immediately after the death of Constantine, in Constantinople discussing with Martina the problems confronting Egypt.

There is a curious item of information which comes mostly from Zonaras. That historian maintains that Constantine was opposed to Monothelitism. Other chroniclers also support the "orthodoxy" of Constantine.[737] Zonaras writes, "Constantine was in his faith correct, succeeding his father to the throne but not to his unorthodox faith, for that it is said Pyrrhus also connived against him..."[738] Irrespective of the last phrase which hints that Pyrrhus concerted with certain parties to poison Constantine, the entire subject has broader implications. There also is extant a letter from Pope John and a reply from Constantine (but which Constantine?).

The problem becomes even more complicated in view of the fact

[734] Brooks, The Successors etc., C.M.H., II, 391.
[735] John Nikiu, ed. Zotenberg, pp. 564-565; John Nikiu, ed. Charles, pp. 116–117; Butler, The Arab Conquest etc., p. 303, fn. 3.
[736] Sébéos, pp. 99–100.
[737] Euphraemius, The Chronicle of Caesars.
[738] Zonaras. Bk, XIV, Chapt. XVIII.

that the three descendants of Heraclius bore the name of Constantine officially. The content of the Papal letter[739] is a defense of the views of Pope Honorius and a condemnation of the Patriarch Pyrrhus for the circular synodical letter which had been sent. Finally the Pope demanded that the "Ecthesis" be withdrawn. Some have maintained that from the tone of the letter Pyrrhus appears to have ceased acting as Patriarch and as though another Patriarch had crowned Constantine.[740] In this instance, I would make the observation that no Patriarch crowned one or the other Constantine. One in fact was crowned by his father Heraclius I in the presence of the Patriarch Sergius and the other by his uncle Heraclius II in the presence of the Patriarch Pyrrhus. The identical names help to confuse the issue.

Pope John's letter, it seems, was addressed to Constantine II and perhaps the latter had sent the reply, although the reply was received by Pope Theodore who had assumed the papal throne in November 642. This considerable lapse in time could lead me to conclude that the reply was written by Constantine III, as Héfélé believes.[741] But the latter Emperor could not have written that he ordered the withdrawal of the "Ecthesis," since he had as his adviser the Patriarch Paul who was a Monothelite. At all events, we have no evidence that Constantine II followed a religious policy different from his father's.[742] It is very likely that he was very moderate in his actions or in his religious activities in order to avoid a clash with the opposite camp. This, after all, would be expected from an Emperor with such an indulgent and mild nature. No record has come down to us of any religious policy that differed from that of his father's.

Constantine reigned for only a few months and according to Manasses died "having said nothing nor accomplished anything worthy of note ...".[743]

As has been pointed out, Constantine was a consumptive tubercular. He died after losing much blood through the mouth. Such

[739] Mansi, X, 682–686.
[740] Bréhier, La fin du régne etc., p. 143.
[741] Héfélé-Leclercq, Histoire des Conciles, III, 497.
[742] Duchsêne, L'Eglise au VIe siècle, p. 435 and fn. 2.
[743] Manasses, v. 3800.

is the information provided by John of Nikiu, the only nearly contemporary chronicler of the time.[744]

All the Byzantine and non-Byzantine chroniclers accuse Martina of poisoning him. Some in fact add that Pyrrhus connived with her to poison him. Theophanes, Cedrenus, Zonaras, Leo the Grammarian, Theodosius of Melitene and Glycas maintain that he was poisoned as described above.[745] Sébéos[746] writes that he fell victim to the machinations of his mother whereas other Eastern chroniclers record that Martina poisoned him so that her son Heraclius would reign.[747] The information Nicephorus provides, that when Philagrius realized the nearness of the death of Constantine and the dangers arising from this, he spread rumours that the Emperor was being poisoned by Martina and the young Heraclius (the later highly improbable because of his tender age), is perhaps the easiest to accept.[748] I do not know where the persistent report that Pyrrhus was implicated in the affair originates. The report of the poisoning reached both the Western and the Eastern chroniclers. It is certainly true, as Ostrogorsky[749] also points out, that Martina was hated passionately by the populace which now openly accused her of many wrongs. It is significant that the accusation against Martina was repeated officially by the son of Constantine II in an address to the Senate.[750] It is quite possible that Constantine's deterioration of health, his recurring hemorrhages (since the consumptive state was well advanced), together with the rumours deliberately circulated by Philagrius and the hatred that was held for Martina, all combined to form this impression and establish the tradition.

I cannot, however, understand why the accusation was ascribed to Pyrrhus as well. At all events, such an accusation against Pyrrhus

[744] John Nikiu, ed. Zotenberg, p. 565.

[745] Theophanes, p. 341; Cedrenus, p. 753; Zonaras, Bk. XIV, Chapt. XVIII; Manasses, v. 3803; Joel, p. 47; Glycas, p. 516; Leo the Grammarian, p. 155; Theodosius Melitene, p. 107. George the Monk, p. 673, merely records that Constantine "was murdered by his next of kin by poison."

[746] Sébéos, p. 103.

[747] Michael the Syrian, II, 426; John Catholicus, p. 73; Bar Hebraeus, p. 96; Anonymous Chronicle of 1234, p. 203; Agapius, p. 195/218; Chronicle of Seert, p. 309.

[748] Nicephorus, p. 28.

[749] Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 100; Gibbon, ed. Bury, V, 175.

[750] Theophanes, p. 342.

was not believed either by the son of Constantine, or the administration or the church, in view of the fact that a few years after his voluntary retirement he was reinstated on the patriarchal throne. But more about him in a following book.

According to Nicephorus, Constantine died after reigning jointly with his father for 28 years and ruling alone for 103 days.[751] Since Heraclius died on February 11, Constantine II should have died on May 24 of 641. The information provided by the various chroniclers concerning the date of his demise is contradictory. Thus, Theophanes says that Constantine reigned 4 months. This is supported by George the Monk, Cedrenus, Agapius, Chronicle of Seert, the Anonymous Chronicle of Sathas, Abul Faradj Bar Hebraeus, and the Anonymous Chronicle of the year 1234. But Theophanes[752] says that Constantine began to rule on March 11, and therefore died on July 11, an unacceptable date.[753] Other chroniclers such as Zonaras, Leo the Grammarian, Joel, Glycas, Euphraemius, Manasses, and Theodore of Melitene maintain that Constantine reigned for a year. Nor is this dating acceptable. The Western chroniclers state that he reigned anywhere from 2 to 6 months. Only the Dandulo chronicle, as this is corrected by the Codex Ambrosianae, mentions 4 months.

Recently, Grierson,[754] relying on the Necrologium of the Emperors,[755] argued that Constantine reigned 103 days, as Nicephorus relates, and died on April 20, 641. I do not agree with this argument. Irrespectively of whether the chronicle records that the duration of the reign was for 6 years or in other instances 4 years, the main Necrologium mentions that Constantine reigned 120 days. Since the 11th of January is cited as the date for the death of Heraclius and therefore the date of the beginning of Constantine's reign, we should conclude that he died on May 10, 641.[756] It is true that

[751] Nicephorus, p. 29. The last part of the statement of Nicephorus is incorrect since he never reigned alone. Even after the death of his father, his brother Herclius II was co-Emperor.

[752] As corrected.

[753] Only Lambros, relying in part on Theophanes and in part on Nicephorus, says that Constantine died on June 23, 641.

[754] Grierson, The Tombs and Obits etc.

[755] In Chronicon Altinate etc., ed. Cessi.

[756] Since the Necrologium records as the date of death of Heraclius, January 11, 641. And if we add to this date the 120 days we arrive at May 10, 641.

Grierson accepts the reliability of Nicephorus's dating and for this reason alters the 120 days mentioned by the Necrologium to 103, yet strangely enough, he concludes with April 20 when the correct date is actually April 23.[757] I confess I cannot fathom why Grierson prefers the 103 days of Nicephorus to the 120 days of the Necrologium, while rejecting the chronology of Nicephorus concerning the date of death of Heraclius, because it conflicts with the chronology of the Necrologium.

Today nearly all historians accept May 24[758] or May 25[759] as the date of Constantine's death, according as to whether they compute the days of his reign as 103 or 104 (?).

It is my view that Constantine II died from the affects of tubercular consumption on May 24, 641. He was buried in the Church of the Holy Apostles, in the Mausoleum of Justinian, in a casket of white Proconesus marble near the grave of his father Heraclius. It is odd indeed that except for the Necrologium no other source makes any mention of Constantine's interment. This was probably due to the confusion caused by the immediate successors of the Emperor who also bore the name of Constantine.

[757] 21 days in January, 28 in February, 31 in March and 23 in April make 103 days. Hence, since the Necrologium gives January 11 for the death of Heraclius, on the basis of Grierson's computation we should reach April 23 and not April 20, for in the latter instance we would have only 100 days.

[758] Brooks, in C.M.H., II, 391; Caspar, op. cit.; Gelzer, Short History etc.; Kaestner, De Imperio etc.; Christofilopoulou, Selection etc.; Dölger, Regesten, No. 218.

[759] Ostrogorsky, op. cit.; Bréhier, in Fliche-Martin, V, 143; Guilland, in Études Byzantines; Duchêsne, op. cit., p. 423; Lebeau-Saint-Martin, Histoire etc., XI, 288; Jorga, Histoire de la vie etc. Diehl (Le Monde Oriental) writes towards the end of May, and Caetani says vaguely May of 641.

CHAPTER X

HERACLIUS II

REVOLUTION AND DETHRONEMENT

The death of Constantine II brought no irregularity in the established manner of succession, nor was there any general difficulty involving the next in line. Irrespective of the will of Heraclius, his second son Heraclius II had been duly crowned as king and Augustus and was the co-Emperor of Constantine. With the death of the latter, power automatically passed on to Heraclius II.

I.

The young Heraclius was then 15 years of age and understandably could not exercise fully his sovereignty alone. Later chroniclers, including Theophanes, Cedrenus, Zonaras, Leo the Grammarian, Glycas, Joel, the Western and Eastern chroniclers, and so on, refer to him as "Heracleonas" or "Heraclonas." I do not know why he was given this name. Perhaps to distinguish him from his father, or because he was so young that he was given a nickname. At all events, officially his name was Heraclius, and he is referred to as such by Nicephorus, Suidas and especially his sole contemporary chronicler John, Bishop of Nikiu. Constantine Porphyrogenitus also refers to him as Heraclius.[760] The populace as well hailed or greeted him as "Augustus Heraclius."[761] Modern historians, indifferent to the correct and official name persist in referring to him as "Heracleonas."[762]

[760] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Cer., II, Chapt. XXVII & XXVIII.
[761] Ibid., II, Chapt. XXIX.
[762] Ostrogorsky, History of the Byzantine State, p. 101; Amantos, History, I, 332; Bury, A History etc., p. 282. The latter writes in fn. 1 of the same page that the populace called him so to distinguish him from his father. Very oddly, however, he also writes that he helped his father in Syria against the

Martina assumed the reins of power together with her son.[763] This understandably enraged all classes of the capital. John, Bishop of Nikiu, records that the entire clergy was opposed to her. The priests argued that it was not proper that the throne be occupied by a boy who was not the fruit of a lawful marriage.[764] Leo the Grammarian, who it would appear had access to a contemporary source, records that Heracleonas was a bastard son of Heraclius. He obviously meant that the marriage of Martina was deemed unlawful and therefore the child issuing from such unholy wedlock must needs be deemed illegitimate. Such were the inclinations of all classes of Constantinople towards Martina. Unfortunately for Martina, her attitude and her actions were so ill-advised that they resulted in even greater animosity and hatred. It was to be expected, Heraclius II being yet so young, that all acts of revenge, all the torture and punishment and the errors of policy and so on, would be laid at her door since she wielded the actual powers of the sovereign. I cannot see why, and I have not been able to discover from the sources why, responsibility for these ill-advised actions were also laid at the door of the Patriarch Pyrrhus.

One of the first acts of Heraclius II was to place the crown which had been removed from the dead Heraclius I on the order of Constantine in the Church of the Holy Wisdom. Nicephorus relates that he dedicated it to God.[765] Knowing the feelings of the army, Martina arranged through Heraclius that each "legatus," that is, a representative of the military formations, be given three gold solidi. In this way she believed that if the attitude of the army to her would not change, at least the measure of hatred would be somewhat diminished.

Martina wasted no time in exacting revenge on all those who had

Saracens! Young Heraclius would then have been 9 or 10 years of age, and I cannot see what kind of help he could have proferred his father. Of course, Bury was misled by the erroneous chronology of Theophanes, and did not bother to correct this, giving 615 as the date of birth of Heraclius. This dating is no longer accepted by scholars. Bréhier, La fin du régne etc. p. 44. I could mention many others. See also Chapt. XV of Vol. I.

[763] Nicephorus, p. 29; Theophanes, p. 341; Cedrenus, p. 753; Joel, p. 47; Manasses, v. 3807; Zonaras, II, 313; Glycas, p. 516; Leo the Grammarian, p. 156; Paul Diaconus, Historia Longobardorum, pp. 136, 137.

[764] John Nikiu, p. 573.

[765] Nicephorus, p. 29; Cedrenus, p. 753.

opposed her early efforts to share in the royal power, and all those who had supported or helped the cause of Constantine II.

Her first victim was Philagrius. Soon after Martina assumed the reins of power she had him seized, tonsured as a monk, and banished to the fortress of Septum, the modern Ceuta.[766] Many other friends of Constantine or individuals who had served under Philagrius were imprisoned or punished by scourging or sent into exile. Such acts on the part of Martina brought nothing but further grievance to the populace. It should be noted that Philagrius enjoyed an extreme popularity among the people of Byzantium.[767] The relevant chapter in John of Nikiu is unfortunately much corrupted and full of lacunae. It has been argued, on the basis of this chapter, that Martina increased the impositions (I presume taxes) of the people. I do not believe this interpretation to be correct. Despite all her mistakes, at a time when the situation was so fraught with danger for both her and her son, I doubt whether she would have passed such an unpopular measure. The letters of Maximus the Confessor[768] inform us that Martina recalled from Africa George, the Eparch of Carthage (and not the Exarch of Africa as Bréhier[769] mistakenly writes) because he had circulated a report to the effect that a certain order she had sent instructing him to free the monks or nuns who had come from Egypt was not authentic. But more about this in another volume.

In the meanwhile, following the instructions of Constantine, Cyrus had returned to Constantinople from his place of exile.

The narrative concerning the Patriarch Cyrus unfortunately has also suffered some alteration due to the text of Theophanes which is not only corrupt but has undergone changes in the hands of various copyists who had made insertions in the text. It is therefore full of contradictions. On the basis of the corrupted text it is maintained that Cyrus was sent to Egypt by Heraclius I to reach an agreement with the Arabs.[770] It is in fact said that he probably arrived in Alexandria before April of 641. But this view is not in my

[766] Nicephorus, p. 29; John Nikiu, p. 573.
[767] John Nikiu, pp. 572–573.
[768] Maximus the Confessor, Letter to John the Cubicularius, in Migne, P.G., XCI, p. 460.
[769] Bréhier, La fin du régne etc., V, 144.
[770] Brooks, On the Chronology etc.

opinion correct. Irrespective of the fact that it conflicts with the information given by contemporary or the more reliable sources, I do not believe it possible that Heraclius I would send Cyrus back to Egypt because the latter was so much disposed to reach an agreement with the Arabs.

John of Nikiu and Nicephorus inform us that Heraclius II and Martina sent Cyrus to Egypt.[771] This was a blunder for which Byzantium paid dearly.

The Patriarch Cyrus did not believe that Egypt could be reconquered and freed from the Arab occupation. Already with the early reverses that the imperial troops had suffered, he had approached the Arabs to discuss the capitulation of the country. This episode and the reaction of Heraclius I have been dealt with in Chapter V. It is possible that Cyrus was unduly influenced by the hatred of the indigenous population of Egypt, by their unwillingness to fight the invader and by their support of the Arabs. After lengthy meeting and deliberation, Martina decided to restore Cyrus to his former position. She sent him urgently to Rhodes where the army was already being subjected to the whispering campaign of Valentinus[772] who was in the process of preparing a rebellion against her.

2.

Valentinus, who had been appointed commander of the army of the East, decided to take advantage of the disturbed atmosphere existing in Constantinople arising from both the hostility to Martina and her ill-conceived policies, and to strike quickly. He distributed to the army the monies that had been sent by Philagrius, and continued to spread reports that Constantine was poisoned by Martina because she wished to rule in the name of her young son. He despatched agents to the various army detachments scattered throughout the provinces and asked that they join the movement against Martina. As was pointed out in a previous paragraph, he had also sent a trusted agent to the army concentrated in Rhodes and asked that the expeditionary force intended for Egypt unite with him to march against Constantinople.[774]

[771] John Nikiu, p. 573; Nicephorus, p. 29; Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 101; Amantos, op. cit., I, 318; Diehl, L'Égypte Chrétienne et Byzantine, p. 549.
[772] John Nikiu, p. 573.
[774] Ibid.

It is not known when precisely Valentinus openly rebelled. But since the army destined for Egypt was to depart from Rhodes in the middle or end of August, the revolt could not have occurred before that date.[775] I would say that Valentinus, at the head of the army of the East, began his march against the capital[776] in early September. He then called upon the commanders of the armies in other provinces to ignore the orders of Martina.[777]

Valentinus was established with his army in Chalcedon. He projected himself as the protector and supporter of the rights of Constantine's children and spread rumours to the effect that their lives were endangered through the machinations of Martina.[778]

Martina immediately summoned the army of Thrace to Constantinople. In this way she was, for the moment at least, in complete control of the situation in the capital, in a position to withstand any attack on the part of Valentinus' army and able to contain any outbreaks of the populace in the city. It is possible that she was then supported to a certain extent by the Green faction.[779]

At the suggestion of Martina, Heraclius II began to make public display of his affection for the sons of Constantine and to proclaim that they were in safe hands and in good health. He would show the young Heraclius, whom he himself had christened some 10 years earlier, before gatherings and public displays and profess that he loved him as a son. In St. Sophia, in the presence of the Patriarch Pyrrhus, the clergy and all the magistrates, he held the True Cross and swore upon it that he had no intentions against their lives, nor would he permit any harm to come to them.[780] Thus at least does Nicephorus describe the scene. But the question arises as to how a mere youth of 15 could do all this and be convincing to all. It appears that Nicephorus had forgotten the tender age of Heraclius II when he wrote of the incident. Heraclius II in fact condemned the

[775] Diehl, Le Monde Oriental, p. 235 and Levtchenko, Byzance etc., p. 125, wrongly maintain that the revolt occurred in October 641. At the time of the rebellion, Pyrrhus was Patriarch of Constantinople whereas in October, Paul occupied the throne.

[776] Sébéos, p. 103.

[777] Brooks, The Successors of Heraclius, in C.M.H., II, 391.

[778] Nicephorus, p. 29; Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 101; Lambros, History etc. III, p. 721; Manojlovic-Grégoire, Le peuple de Constantinople, p. 701.

[779] Amantos, op. cit., pp. 321–322.

[780] Nicephorus, pp. 29–30.

action of Valentinus and accused him of abandoning the war against the Muslems,[781] and added that the aim of Valentinus was not to support the children of Constantine whom no one in any event threatened but to seize the imperial power.

But it appears that these assurances did not bring the desired results, for neither were the disturbances which were brewing in Constantinople mitigated, nor did Valentinus and the army of the East show any indication that they had faith in the promises. Following this failure, a new gesture was made.

Accompanied by numerous bishops, magistrates and so on, and in the company of the young Heraclius, Heraclius II crossed by ship to Chalcedon. There he addressed the army, and according to John of Nikiu, spoke as follows: "Do not abandon Christian sincerety by rebelling against me. Adhere to the wishes and the will of my father Heraclius who had undergone so much for his country." He promised furthermore that he would adopt his nephew, the young Heraclius, and make him co-Emperor, He also swore that he would recall Philagrius from exile.[782]

We have no record of what reply Valentinus gave or what guarantees he demanded. Nicephorus unfortunately is very cut and dry. He records that Valentinus and the army were not convinced of the Emperor's sincerety and refused to budge from Chalcedon. At all events, Heraclius II returned to Constantinople without having accomplished anything. There he related all that had taken place, then accused Valentinus of wanting to usurp the throne and of not being concerned with the fate of Constantine's offspring. Nicephorus goes on to relate that those in the city were persuaded by the words of Heraclius (a youth of 15 ?) and began to accuse Valentinus and to hold him responsible for any deterioration of the situation.

Soon afterwards (we do not know how long afterwards), the situation in Constantinople became more tense. Concerning these developments and the ensuing phases, there are two somewhat conflicting versions in the sources.

Nicephorus relates that when the grape-gathering season had come (hence September 641), the inhabitants of the city who owned

[781] John Nikiu, p. 573.
[782] Nicephorus, p. 30; John Nikiu, p. 579.

vineyards in the areas on the opposite Anatolian coast were informed that the troops of Valentinus were distributing their properties and holdings amongst themselves. They also learned that they would be forbidden to cross over to harvest their crop. After this, the people of Constantinople began to rebel and pressed the Patriarch Pyrrhus to crown the young Heraclius, son of Constantine, as Emperor. Then Nicephorus refers to the coronation and the subsequent agreement between Heraclius II and Valentinus.

John of Nikiu,[783] on the other hand, writes that when Valentinus observed that all had obeyed the exhortations of Heraclius II when he met the former at Chalcedon, he then together with the other patricians crowned the "young Constantine," son of Constantine II, Emperor. Hence there exist two versions: 1) that of Nicephorus, more or less accepted by later Byzantine historians, which says that the son of Constantine II was crowned by Heraclius II following which the agreement was made with Valentinus and the army of Asia Minor, and 2) that of Nikiu according to which the agreement between Heraclius and Valentinus preceeded the crowning of the son of Constantine by the latter. This version, somewhat confused, both from the point of view of the sequence of events and the chronology, is accepted by Sébéos[784] (see Note XXVI).

It is my impression that, irrespective of the grape-gathering season and so on, the rebelliousness of the populace of Constantinople against Martina and her son, somewhat tempered by the arrival of the army of Thrace, continued nevertheless to simmer. The clergy, as has already been pointed out, argued that Heraclius II was the offspring of an illegal union. The friends of Philagrius had suffered much at the hands of Martina. The senators, the aristocracy and the Blues could not accept Martina's wielding of power. All these factors would inevitably lead to an insurrection on the part of the populace and the imposition of a different solution albeit but temporary. Moreover, persistent whispers that Constantine had been poisoned by Martina contributed even more to the uncontrolled rage of the masses.

At the end of September in 641, the disturbances reached such a critical point that the Patriarch Pyrrhus himself intervened to put a stop to the mutinous outburst. He again argued that the rebellion

[783] John Nikiu, p. 579.
[784] Sébéos, pp. 103–104.

would help none other than Valentinus who was not really concerned about the sons of Constantine but was interested in seizing the imperial power for himself. But the rebellious masses would have none of this and continued to press Pyrrhus. Following this, Pyrrhus was forced to admit to Martina that the situation had gotten completely out of hand. Heraclius II, most probably at the instigation of Martina, then took his nephew and godchild, the young Heraclius, to the Church of the Holy Wisdom, where large groups of people had assembled in mutinous mood. Pyrrhus ascended the ambo and strove to calm the excited mob. Heraclius II also ascended the ambo with his nephew and commanded Pyrrhus to crown the young boy co-Emperor.

The people realized at that moment that something irregular was about to take place, something quite contrary to the traditional ritual for coronation, and cried out that the crowning ceremony should be performed by Heraclius II himself. In fact, until that time the co-Emperors were normally designated and crowned by the Emperors. Hence the crowning ceremony by the Patriarch would be an innovation and through the innovation a sharp distinction would be made between the roles of Emperor and that of co-Emperor.[785]

Heraclius II acceded to the demands of the people and took the crown of his father Heraclius I which had been placed in the Church as a gift to St. Sophia, and placed it on his nephew's head.[786]

The coronation took place before the end of September, probably between the 27th and the 29th of the month, in the year 641, since the Patriarch Pyrrhus was also present.[787]

It has been maintained, and probably rightly so, that this was the first instance of a coronation of an emperor in the Church of St. Sophia. Christofilopoulou does not accept this view.[788]

[785] Christofilopoulou, Selection etc., p. 72.

[786] Nicephorus, p. 30; Amantos, History etc., I, 321; Diehl, op. cit., p. 236; Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 101; Brooks, op. cit., II, 392; Lambros, op. cit., V, p. 721; Lebeau-St. Martin, XI, 290; Ostrogorsky in Kornemann, Doppel Prinzipat usw., p. 164.

[787] Gelzer, in Short Byzantine History; Levtchenko, Byzance, etc.; Baynes, The Byzantine Empire; Brooks, On the Chronology etc.

[788] Christofilopoulou, Selection etc., p. 72, fn. 1. She supports the view that Heraclius I was the first to be crowned in St. Sophia. As I pointed out in Volume I, there exists some confusion concerning the problem. But I admitted that the coronation took place in the palace and that in the early hours of the

But the coronation immediately created a constitutional question. How was it possible for two emperors to reign simultaneously, and both with the same name? Heraclius was Emperor, and a Heraclius co-Emperor. It is certain that Heraclius II, who was then 15 years of age, and Pyrrhus, who was very agitated by the entire affair, could not at that moment have grasped the significance of the act. The people, however, were not deceived, and straightway hailed the young Heraclius as Constantine.[789]

Some confusion has arisen by the change of name. All scholars maintained that it was solely done to honor his father. This interpretation certainly has some basis. But the alteration of name occurred because there could not be two coexisting Emperors of Byzantium, two persons bearing the same name. Young Heraclius was renamed Constantine for this reason. But at the same time, the people, in no uncertain fashion, could once again express their hatred for Martina. They never ceased to believe she had poisoned the father of Constantine. At all events, the new name was given by the people[790] and not by Valentinus (see Note XXVII).

3.

Despite the coronation of Heraclius-Constantine, the riots and the tumult continued in the city. Nicephorus relates that "the vulgar and coarse mob ..." broke into the inner sanctum of the Church, hurling threats against Pyrrhus. In the evening of the same day, he adds, the mob, accompanied by "Jews" and "other false believers," again entered the inner sanctum. Having profaned the altar, they tore the cover of the Holy Altar, then seized the keys to the gates of the Church which they carried on a pike and paraded through the streets of the city.

afternoon (Chronicon Paschale, I, 701) a panegyrical service was held in St. Sophia, but the church had first to be emptied of the fugitive Blues who had sought asylum therein. With the success of Heraclius, the Greens began to attack the Blues who were supporters of Phocas. The latter were forced to seek refuge in churches and St. Sophia was overflowing with their numbers. They were freed as soon as the situation had returned to normal.

[789] Nicephorus, p. 30.

[790] Nicephorus, ibid.; Brooks, op. cit., II, 392; Lambros, ibid.; Bury, A History etc., II, 285; Lebeau-St. Martin, ibid.

The excerpt from Nicephorus informs us of the attack of the mob against St. Sophia and its attempt to assault the Patriarch. It is true that Pyrrhus was not liked because of his stance in the Philagrius affair, his support of Martina, and the reports of his involvement in the suspected poisoning of Constantine II.

There was in Constantinople a numerous and flourishing Jewish colony,[791] but it is hard to believe, as many contemporary historians, that the Jews took part in the riots against Pyrrhus, and as Sharf maintains, even played a leading role in the movement.

Some historians, using Nikiu, Theophanes, Cedrenus and others as sources, believe that the removal of Pyrrhus and therefore the riot against him took place simultaneously with the outbreak against Martina and Heraclius II. Pyrrhus was, at all events, dismissed on September 29. Therefore, the outbreak, of necessity, occurred on September 28 of 641.

It is my impression that while the riots were continuing in Constantinople, the populace turned or was instigated to turn against Pyrrhus as a staunch supporter of Martina and Heraclius II. It is most likely that this particular outburst was but an extension of the popular revolt which had forced Heraclius II to crown his nephew as co-Emperor. And possibly all these occurrences took place in the course of a single day, in which case the coronation took place at noon on September 28, and in the afternoon or evening of the same day the mob reassembled to attack Pyrrhus. Due to the paucity of sources, we are forced to make certain suppositions which seem to fit in logically with the course of events.

The following evening (using the Nicephorus text), that is, of the 29th September, Pyrrhus entered the inner sanctum, kissed the sacred objects and the pallium (the archbishop's garment), and left a note with the words, "Without abandoning the priesthood, I do hereby leave a disobedient people."[792] Then straightway he went into hiding in a house of a "most devout" woman and eventually sailed off to Chalcedon. De Boor, who edits the Nicephorus text, hints that the destination is probably a scribe's error and should perhaps be corrected to read Carthage (in Greek "Charcedon") in place of Chalcedon (see Note XXVIII).

[791] Sharf, Byzantine Jewry etc.; Baron, Histoire d'Israel, III, 205; Bréhier, La civilisation Byzantine, p. 301.

[792] Nicephorus, p. 31.

The narration of events as presented by Nicephorus conflicts with the versions of both John of Nikiu and Theophanes, as well as with other Byzantine chroniclers.

According to Nikiu, Pyrrhus was deposed without a synod being summoned following a further rebellion on the part of the army which at one blow dethroned both Martina and Heraclius II. Hence, Nikiu records two revolutions before Pyrrhus was removed from the patriarchate.[793] He adds that Pyrrhus was finally sent to Tripoli to the country to which Philagrius had been banished.[794]

But Theophanes, Cedrenus, Zonaras and Michael the Syrian report that Pyrrhus was expelled at the same time that Heraclius II and Martina were dethroned.[795]

So on the basis of these two varying versions, Pyrrhus either fled of his own volition in fear of the rebellious populace of the capital, or he was ejected following a new outbreak on the part of the army and the decision of the Senate. At least the chronology is certain, because all sources agree that Pyrrhus abandoned the patriarchal throne on September 29, 641.[796]

I would suggest that the narrative of Nicephorus is the more

[793] John Nikiu, p. 580. I do not believe that Nikiu's narrative holds water. 1) He records that following the first mutiny of Valentinus, Philagrius was recalled from exile. 2) In the second mutiny under "Jutalius" Philagrius was recalled anew. 3) In the first mutiny the young Constantine is crowned emperor by Valentinus and Domentianus, whereas in the second he is crowned by "Jutalius." The text is obviously very corrupt, or Nikiu who wrote at a time when Egypt was occupied by the Arabs, after which all ties with Byzantium had been cut, had received different reports which he was unable to verify and so incorporated them in his text in the form in which he had received these versions without being critically selective.

[794] Further erroneous information on the part of Nikiu. Philagrius had been banished to Septem (Ceuta), whereas Pyrrhus had gone to Carthage. The only association is that these two places were both in North Africa.

[795] Theophanes, p. 341; Cedrenus, p. 754; Zonaras, III, p. 313; Michael the Syrian, II, 427.

[796] Nicephorus, Chronographia Breva, p. 118, two years, nine months and nine days. Since Pyrrhus became patriarch on December 20, 638, the date of his retirement is the above. Grumel, Les Actes de Patriarches, No. 297, irrespective of whether Grumel speaks of the resignation of Pyrrhus. Brooks, On the Lists of the Patriarchs etc. Brooks also mentions "the resignation" of Pyrrhus. On the other hand, Brooks himself in the C.M.H., II, 392, writes explicitly that Pyrrhus did not resign.

accurate. Nicephorus was Patriarch of Constantinople some 160 years after the retirement of Pyrrhus. As patriarch he had access to the archives and records of the patriarchate and was in the position of ascertaining quite accurately the chronology of an ecclesiastical event about which he himself writes. Nicephorus records that in October, in the 15th Indiction, hence 641,[797] Heraclius II and Martina placed Paul on the patriarchal throne. Pyrrhus, therefore, must have abandoned his see before Heraclius II and Martina were dethroned.

Ostrogorsky argues that it is not conceivable that at a time when Martina held the reins of power she should allow her supporter Pyrrhus to be expelled.[798] But Pyrrhus was not expelled, *he left the city of his own volition*. But more on the dethronement of Heraclius II in the ensuing paragraphs.

Confronted by a popular revolt, and realizing that the days of Martina and Heraclius were numbered, I believe that Pyrrhus thought it expedient to leave the scene as soon as possible. His life was obviously endangered, the populace was anxious for his blood, the clergy which had turned against Martina and Heraclius was hostile to him. Old friends of Philagrius were bitterly opposed to him. If Martina were to be expelled, who would remain to support, to protect and to assist him? Faced with such an unfavourable situation, he wisely decided to flee.

The flight of Pyrrhus has raised a considerable problem. He had fled, but *he had not relinquished his office*, despite all that has been maintained by contemporary historians.[799] This can be deduced from the following evidence: 1) Nicephorus says that before Pyrrhus departed he had written, "without abandoning the priesthood I do hereby leave a disobedient people," which is very straightforward. 2) When he reached Rome he was received by Pope Theodore as the

[797] 15th Indiction, that is September 1, 641 to August 31, 642. Eutychius, p. 1096, also relates that Paul, a Maronite (a Monothelite) was appointed by Martina.

[798] Ostrogorsky, op. cit., fn. 1, p. 102.

[799] Duchêsne, Histoire de l'Église etc., p. 433; Ostrogorsky, ibid.; Bréhier, La fin du régne etc., V, 145. The latter writes very oddly that Pyrrhus went into self-exile to Tripoli(?), having been tonsured a monk(?). But Bréhier forgets that Pyrrhus had been tonsured and had served as abbot in the monastery of Chrysopolis.

Patriarch of Constantinople.[800] 3) In the letter of the African bishops (Columbus, Reparatus, Stephanus etc.) to the Patriarch Paul, dated 646, the bishops refer to Pyrrhus as "our brother in God Bishop of Constantinople," and to Paul as "our brother in God now heading the church in Constantinople."[801] In his letters to the Patriarch Paul and bishops of the capital, Pope Theodore argues that, "the hatred of the populace cannot deprive one of the bishoprical rank." Theodore insisted that the chair of Pyrrhus could not be filled until he was dethroned by decision of the synod. He went on to suggest that the entire matter be regulated by the summoning of a regular synod at which his own legate Martinus would be present.[802]

The above evidence, I believe, is convincing enough that Pyrrhus did not resign from the patriarchal throne but merely abandoned the Byzantine capital.[803]

After the flight of Pyrrhus, Constantinople was left without a patriarch, and there was no indication as to the whereabouts of the cleric who had disappeared. Under the circumstances, it was decided to replace him with Paul who had been the economus (Treasurer) of St. Sophia. Paul held the patriarchal throne for 12 years and 26 days.[804] Scholars agree with the number of years, but there is a discrepancy concerning the days. All sources inform us that Paul was installed as patriarch in October of 641 (not the first of October as Grumel maintains without citing any source). The same sources say that Paul died on December 27, 653,[805] consequently, he was patriarch for 12 years and over two months.

[800] Liber Pontificalis, pp. 331–333; Peitz, Martin I und Maximus usw.; and Bréhier, Le Démembrement etc., V, 164, who appears to have forgotten a few pages earlier in his narrative that he had written Pyrrhus resigned.

[801] Mansi, X, 920, 921; Migne, P.L., LXXXVII, pp. 83–86.

[802] See letters in Jaffé-Wattenbach, Regesta etc., Nos. 2049, 2050 and 2052 of 642-643. Mansi, X, 706 ff. Grumel in the Actes des Patriarches, p. 297, cites Mansi to prove that Pyrrhus resigned. But the citation refers to the above letters of Pope Theodore in which no reference to the resignation of Pyrrhus is made, and in fact, the contrary is supported. Moreover, the Pope himself, 3 or 4 years later, received Pyrrhus as the lawful Patriarch of Constantinople.

[803] Brooks, in C.M.H., II, 392.

[804] Nicephorus, Short Chronicle, p. 118; Theophanes, p. 342; Cedrenus, p. 754.

[805] Brooks, The London Catalogue etc.

4.

The events which followed on the crowning of the young Heraclius-Constantine and the flight of Pyrrhus are very confusing indeed. Nicephorus relates that the coronation of the young co-Emperor was not enough to convince Valentinus and the army of Asia Minor to abandon Chalcedon. In the wake of such adamance, Martina was forced to come to a compromise. Most probably it was this compromise which the populace of Constantinople had demanded when it rebelled and forced Heraclius II to crown his young nephew as co-Emperor. Valentinus was made a Count of the Excubitors, one of the most exalted ranks in Byzantium. John of Nikiu writes that Valentinus was named Caesar[806] and assumed the purple. Although I do not agree that this is absolutely correct, I will not go into details concerning the Valentinus affair since it is beyond the scope of this volume. The troops of Valentinus were rewarded with financial gifts. Martina swore an official oath that she would not seek the return of the monies which were given him by Constantine II, and in exchange Martina's other son, David, who was then 11 years of age and who had been proclaimed Caesar on July 4, 638,[807] was also crowned as third co-Emperor.[808] David was renamed (?) Tiberius.[809] Thus we find in Byzantium in October 641 three co-Emperors, Heraclius II, age 15 years, Heraclius-Constantine, age 11 and David-Tiberius, age 11 years.

According to Sébéos,[810] Valentinus soon after collected his army and marched into the East. Brooks maintains that he advanced to Cappadocia (or Cilicia?) to operate against the Arabs. This is probably accurate because John of Nikiu relates that Valentinus and his army did not or could not come to the aid of Egypt. I doubt whether any attempt was made to succour Egypt, for Cyrus had already begun negotiations with Amr for its surrender. It is most likely that Valentinus had gone to Cilicia to stop the Arab invaders who under Ibn-Quays had penetrated that province for a razzia.[811]

[806] John Nikiu, p. 582; Lambros, op. cit., p. 721.
[807] Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Cer., Bk. II, Chapt. XXVII.
[808] Nicephorus, p. 31.
[809] Brooks, op. cit., II, 392; Bury, op. cit., II, 286; Lebeau-St. Martin, XI, 291.
[810] Sébéos, p. 104.
[811] Brooks, The Arabs in Asia Minor; Bréhier, Vie et Mort de Byzance, p. 58.

In the period several coins were minted on which were depicted the three co-Emperors. Of these coins, however, only the copper have survived.[812]

Nikiu relates that at this time Philagrius was recalled from exile, but no source records him as holding any public office or rank.

At some time in this period the Senate, the army and the populace rebelled against the new status quo. And as usual, in this very dark period, the very meagre information from the few extant sources is contradictory, obscure and confusing.

Our primary sources for this period is unfortunately Nicephorus who leaves a blank of 27 whole years in his narrative, from the coronation of David-Tiberius which he dates in October 641 to the murder of Constantine III in 668. Hence the events which I am about to describe are not covered by Nicephorus and of course occurred after October 641.

Certain questions arise which must be examined: 1) When the revolution took place and 2) Who was responsible for the rebellion? Firstly, we should cite what few sources are available.

1) Theophanes[813] says that Heraclius (Heraclonas) reigned jointly with his mother for 6 months, and in the year of the Creation 6133 (A.D. 641/642), hence the year following the death of Heraclius I, the Senate ousted "Heraclonas together with his mother Martina and Valentinus ... and raised Constas, the son of Constantine ... to the throne."

Cedrenus writes much the same as Theophanes. I will examine all the sources concerning the incident in Note XXIX.

2) John of Nikiu relates a very strange story.[814] Soon after the coronation of the young Heraclius-Constantine, the army of "Cappadocia" (I presume he means Asia Minor) had become most agitated. A letter had arrived reputedly from Martina and Pyrrhus addressed to "David the Logothete" (?) in which it was suggested that he should subdue the mutineers mercilessly, then marry Martina and expel the sons of Constantine from the throne. When the "inhabitants" of Constantinople learned of this, they said the one

The former relies on Tabari and Ibn-al-Athir. According to Michael the Syrian (II, 431), the Arab incursion was led by Muawiyah.

[812] Sabatier, Monnaies Byzantines, I, 290.

[813] Theophanes, p. 341.

[814] John Nikiu, pp. 579–580.

most responsible for the plot was Kubrat, leader of the Huns,[815] who was closely associated with Heraclius I, and so on. In the wake of this report, the people of Byzantium and the army (which army?) rebelled having as their leader "Vitalius, named Theodore, son of Constantine ..." When David learned of this, he fled to the fortress of "Armenia." "Vitalius" followed in pursuit, and no one could help David who was captured and decapitated, and his head was displayed throughout "the East." After this, Theodore assembled a numerous army and marched against Constantinople where he expelled Martina, Heraclius and Pyrrhus. Note XXX deals with the improbability of the narrative.

3) Sébéos[816] on the other hand writes that Valentinus at the head of the army of the East advanced against Constantinople only once, removed Martina and Heraclius II and placed "Constas," the son of Constantine, on the throne.

Accordingly, concerning the new rebellion and the removal of Martina and Heraclius II, we have two versions: that of Theophanes (and the later chroniclers who follow him), and that of John of Nikiu, since Sébéos knows of only one revolution. On the basis of the above sources we have an answer to the second question. The rebellion was undertaken by the Senate, or by the army and the populace. But we have no conclusive answer to the first question, that concerning the date of the revolt.

If we rely on Theophanes then the insurrection took place in January 642.[817] But if on the other hand we turn to Leo the Grammarian[818] and Theodosius of Melitene, then we must admit that the rebellion occurred in July 642.

[815] Kubrat, Khan of the Bulgars of the Volga who had rebelled against the Avars. See Chapter VII.

[816] Sébéos, pp. 103–104.

[817] With the corrected dating of Theophanes, Heraclius I died in March 641 and Constantine reigned 4 months. He therefore died in July 641. Then Heracleonas reigned for 6 months by which we reach January 642. Diehl (Le Monde Oriental, p. 236) and Levtchenko (Byzance etc., p. 126) both accept this dating.

[818] Leo the Grammarian usually follows Theophanes since it appears that he had the same sources as Theophanes for this period. But in this instance he writes that Constantine II reigned for one year and Heracleonas, whom he calls the bastard son of Heraclius, ruled for 4 months. Hence March 641 plus one year equals March 642, and an additional 4 months make July 642, a totally improbable date.

We cannot reach any absolutely certain conclusions on the basis of the Nikiu narrative. He writes that following the Amr-Cyrus agreement which was concluded on November 28, 641, Cyrus despatched the general Constantine and the Augustalius Theodore to Constantinople to have the treaty approved and ratified by Heraclius II[819]. Therefore, in early December, the revolt against Heraclius II had not yet taken place or news of the rebellion had not yet reached Egypt. Under the circumstances, the revolt could not have occurred before Noevember 15, 641. Moreover, it is my view that those who had seized power after the fall of Martina could not so easily approve of the Cyrus agreement which conflicted so much with the policy of both Heraclius I and Constantine II.

There is yet another passage which may help with the chronology. Theophanes (p. 341) dates the decision of the Senate and hence the revolt against Heraclius II after the fall of Caesaria in Palestine. Such chronological juxtaposition of unrelated events is a common feature of Theophanes and all Byzantine chroniclers. As has been pointed out in Chapter IV, Caesaria fell to the Arabs in September or October of 641 (Baladhuri, p. 219 writes October or November). It is very likely that the first waves of refugees had begun to arrive in November together with the garrison of Caesaria and this may have started the disturbances which finally led to open rebellion.

Relying on the text of Leo the Grammarian, Ostrogorsky has contended that Heraclius II, Martina and Pyrrhus were deprived of power towards the end of September 641 at the latest. But this contention conflicts not only with the information of Nicephorus, but of John of Nikiu and all chroniclers, not to mention the text of Leo himself by which, as has been pointed out above, we reach July 642. There exists unfortunately a habit among contemporary historians to form a chronology all their own which conflicts with all chroniclers. Note XXXI explains why the Ostrogorsky version is not correct.

It is my view that there exist two dates which we cannot ignore, those of Nicephorus and Nikiu. Hence towards the end of 641 and early 642,[820] the riots took place following which the Senate removed

[819] John Nikiu, p. 576. See Chapter V, para. 6.

[820] Brooks, C.M.H., II, 392, writes that the revolt took place in December 641. Diehl, Le Monde Oriental, p. 236, says early 642, but in Le Sénat et le

Heraclius II and Tiberius, and Constantine III ruled alone. The report by Byzantine and other chroniclers saying that Martina and Pyrrhus were expelled is not correct. Martina had no official position in the Empire from which she could be removed, and the Patriarch cannot be dismissed by decision of a political body such as the Senate.

What precisely happened we cannot ascertain. Revolution on the part of the army or a rebellion of the populace? These can only remain suppositions. It is more probable that the Senate which was dominated by the aristocracy and therefore opposed to Martina, took advantage of the great turmoil to depose Heraclius II and to order his seizure, that of Martina, of David-Tiberius and the other children of Martina. It is certain that in this tumultous period the power and influence of the Senate had increased[821] but some upheaval must have preceeded to enable the Senators to act.

Quite possibly riots broke out which had been instigated by the Blues, as Dvornik maintains. The Blue faction, as has been pointed out in Volume I, consisted of the aristocracy, the wealthy merchant class, their neighbours and freedmen. They were later supported by the young Constantine.[822] An inscription found in the walls of Byzantium of the 7th Century indicates that the Blue faction played a part in the insurrection. It reads, "The fortune of Constantine our God-protected ruler and of the Blues is victorious."[823] This view is supported by yet further evidence. The general Domentianus who had joined Valentinus and acted with him was a leader of the Blue faction in Alexandria and was expelled by the Patriarch Cyrus soon after the latter arrived in the city.[824] If therefore the rebellion in the capital was instigated by the Blues, the Senate, of whom most were members or supporters of that faction, would have understandably acted immediately and firmly for the cause.

Peuple etc., mentions October 641. Bréhier supports November 641, whereas the Russian scholars maintain January 642. Du Cange records that the rebellion occurred in December 641.

[821] Christofilopoulou, op. cit., p. 72; Lécrivain, Le Sénat Romain etc.; Diehl, Le Sénat et le peuple etc.; Dvornik, The Circus Parties, etc.

[822] Bréhier, Les Institutions de l'Empire Byzantin, p. 200.

[823] Grégoire, Notules Épigraphiques; Amantos, op. cit., 322; Bréhier, op. cit.

[824] John of Nikiu, pp. 570 and 574.

5.

Theophanes[825] and the other Byzantine chroniclers record that after Heraclius and Martina were seized, the Senate ordered that the nose of the former and the tongue of the latter be slit.

Martina had been accused of poisoning Constantine II, and the rage of the clergy, the aristocracy and the people had turned against her. The nose-slitting of Heraclius had another purpose, namely, that he could never hope to recover the imperial power. Many western scholars have accused the Byzantines of undue inhuman treatment of their fallen emperors. They appear to forget the barbarous customs then practiced in the West where some were confined to cages and others cast alive into dark and airless dungeons. Nose-slitting is certainly a very unpleasant practice for the one who must suffer it. But the Byzantines preferred a more humane treatment. They would not deprive one of life, or inflict any torture. Those who suffered such punishment were set free, but they could no longer plan an insurrection or hope to recover imperial power.

Sébéos and the Armenian historians[826] say that Valentinus seized Martina, slit her tongue, then murdered her children. According to Eutychius,[827] Heraclius II was killed by the advisors of young Constantine who afterwards raised him to the throne.

The narrative of John of Nikiu provides more information somewhat of a confusing nature. He records[828] that Theodore seized Martina and her three sons, Heraclius, David and Marinus, slit their noses and sent them to Rhodes, but the younger he also had castrated lest he have ambitions of recovering the throne when he grew up. But the boy soon died due to the wound he received. And that the other son of Martina who was deaf and dumb was not harmed because of his infirmity since he could not be a threat to the throne. Nikiu goes on to relate that they invalidated the will of Heraclius I and proclaimed as emperor "Constans," son of Constantine. The narration is obviously unreliable. Marinus was the

[825] Theophanes, p. 341; Cedrenus, p. 754; Zonaras, III, p. 313; Joel, p. 47; Manasses, vv. 3813, 3814; Glycas, p. 516; Anonymous Synopsis Sathas, p. 110; Leo the Grammarian, p. 156; Theodosius Melitene, p. 108; Euphraemius, Caesars.

[826] Sébéos, pp. 103–104; Vardan p. 85.

[827] Eutychius, p. 1111.

[828] John of Nikiu, pp. 580–581.

youngest son of Martina. Did he have his nose slit or was he castrated? Two pages earlier in the narrative Nikiu writes that Valentinus, Domentianus and the patricians crowned "the young Constantine," son of Constantine, and grandson of the Great Heraclius, emperor. How does this fit in with the later part of the narrative when after a certain period of time Theodore, following a revolution, again crowns "Constans," son of Constantine, as emperor?

Contemporary historians[829] agree that by decision of the Senate Martina lost her tongue and the nose of Heraclius II was slit, but oddly enough they insist that Martina was deposed. But deposed from what?

Martina and her family were banished to Rhodes. It is noteworthy that only Nikiu mentions the place of exile. There they lived out their lives peacefully and unmolested.

Doubts exist concerning the burial place of Heraclius II. Leo the Grammarian and others[830] say that he was not given a royal burial and was interred in a "Metropolitan" monastery together with his mother Martina. On the basis of this passage of Leo, Grierson[831] has maintained that Heraclius and Martina were buried in the Monastery of the Bishops at Constantinople,[832] where subsequently Theodosia, wife of Leo V, was also interred. But I do not believe Grierson is justified in his assertion.[833] It would be most unnatural that the body of Martina and later of Heraclius II should be transferred from Rhodes to Constantinople to be interred in a monastery and not in the royal tombs. It is most probable that they were buried in some cathedral (Bishoprical) monastery of Rhodes.

In such manner and thus ingloriously was the reign of the offspring of Heraclius I and Martina terminated. The ambition of the latter, and especially the unbridled hatred of which she herself had been the cause, contributed to their fall.

[829] Amantos, op. cit., I, 322; Diehl, Le Monde Oriental, p. 236; Ostrogorsky, op. cit., p. 102; Brooks, op. cit., II, 392; Lebeau-St. Martin, XI, 202.

[830] Leo the Grammarian, pp. 156–157; Cedrenus, p. 754; Theodosius Melitene, p. 108.

[831] Grierson, Tombs and Obits etc., p. 33 and fn. 119.

[832] Janin, Les Eglises et les Monastéres de Constantinople, p. 93.

[833] I fear that Grierson was unduly influenced by the word "despotico". The "despot" refers not only to emperors. It is also the bishop who is so addressed by the people. Hence "despotico" is not a royal but a cathedral or bishoprical monastery.

HISTORICAL NOTES

I. Many historians have dealt at length with the initial advance of the Arab detachments, their numbers, their movements and so on. But as I have pointed out elsewhere, the Arab sources of which none are contemporary with the events are so confusing, and the information so contradictory that one cannot with assurance obtain a happy result. Wellhausen (Skizzen etc.), who examined studiously and correlated all the sources of Arabic origin, writes: The Muslems (he perhaps should have written Arabs instead, since not even half the forces involved were Mohammedans) advanced into Syria with four armies totalling 21,000 men. Later Ikrima (on the basis of the Tabari text) was sent with 6,000 men which army was used as a reserve. Heraclius assembled at Emesa a huge army and despatched his brother Theodore with 90,000 men against Amr, Garaga(?) against Yiazid, Duraqis(?) against Shurahbil and Vicarius ben Nastas (I presume Anastasius the Vicarius?) with 60,000 men against Ubaydah. Khalid arrived in Syria from Iraq with 10,000. The two armies for a period of three months were engaged in various skirmishes until finally the major clash took place at Adjnadayn. There the first great test of battle was given between Romans and Muslems. I should like to observe, as does Wellhausen, that such a vast Byzantine army could not possibly be assembled. It simply did not exist. 200,000 men by sheer numbers alone would have overwhelmed 36,000 Arabs. He also adds that Ubaydah was appointed by Umar and he arrived in Syria a little before the battle of Yarmuk (in 636).

II. The reports of this engagement as well as of Khalid Ibn Sayd are conflicting. Mardj al-Suffar, where he gave battle, is a plain lying 33 kilometres south of Damascus near the modern Tell Shakhab. It is traversed by the small river Arram (see Lammens in E.I. III, pp. 294–295). Concerning the engagement in this area, there exist many versions. There is a tradition based on the narrative of Sayf ben Umar and which is followed by Tabari, Ibn Khaldoun and Ibn al-Athir. It relates that Khalid ben Sayd was not replaced but advanced against the Arab Christians who had concentrated on the frontier in the Balkas region with a detachment of volunteers. At the position of Abil, 10 kilometres south of Amman, he engaged and scattered their forces, or according to others, he dissolved them without giving battle. Then Abu Bakr decided to send reinforcements and occupy Syria. Shurahbil was despatched with reinforcements of Yemenites. Significantly, he originated from Yemen. But Khalid did not await all the reinforcements and when he was joined by the Khodaites under Walid ben Uqbah, ignoring the advice of the Caliph to move carefully, advanced to Damascus. He was led into an ambush laid by the Byzantine commander Vaanes and in the ensuing battle of Mardj al-Suffar his army was completely routed and he himself fell in the engagement.

According to another version, his son was slain together with many Muslems. Only those managed to escape who had camels and horses. Then Shurahbil gathered the refugees and joined forces with Yiazid. This version is not accepted by Goeje and Caetani. On the other hand, Caussin de Perceval, Pernice and Muir among others believe that the invasion of Palestine began in such manner. Since Baladhuri and other chroniclers refer to a battle that subsequently occurred at Mardj al-Suffar in 635, I believe that Sayf's narrative has some basis of fact irrespective of whether he may not be chronologically accurate.

Yet another version relates that after the battle of Fihl and when Khalid Ibn Walid began his advance towards Damascus, Khalid Ibn-Sayd at the head of a small detachment encountered the Byzantine army at Mardj al-Suffar where a bloody battle took place in which Khalid Ibn-Sayd lost his life. His wife, whom he married but the previous day, seized a tent pole and with it slew 7 Greeks. The clash occurred on the 1st of Muharram of the 14th year (February 25, 635). 4,000 Muslems were slain and the unbelievers were finally forced to flee (Baladhuri, pp. 182–183).

Having carefully examined the entire incident, Goeje concludes that the engagement took place on the date specified by Baladhuri, but that Khalid Ibn Sayd was encircled by the Romans, defeated and killed (Goeje, Mémoire etc., pp. 78–79). The siege of Damascus began 15 days after this battle (ibid., op. cit., p. 82).

Caetani also examined the entire incident in great detail. Having analysed all the narratives of the chroniclers, he recorded both versions, that of Baladhuri and the other, according to which Abu Bakr bowed to the demand of Umar and replaced Khalid Ibn Sayd, and the version of Sayf, by which Abu Bakr refused to accede and did not replace Khalid. Caetani, basing his view also on the conclusions of Miednikoff, does not accept the version of Sayf as accurate. Caetani argues that the silence of the Greek sources in the case of a Greek victory at Mardj al-Suffar should lead to a rejection of the entire narrative. But because he cannot ignore the battle, he concludes that an engagement may have occurred before the battle of Adjnadayn and in the period, as Wellhausen also admits (Skizzen usw.), when small skirmishes took place in Transjordan.

My impressions to the foregoing may be summed up as follows: 1. Some clash obviously did occur at Mardj al-Suffar. This is recorded categorically by all sources. 2. Khalid Ibn Sayd was a friend and companion of Mohammed who named him a governor of the upper Yemen (see Baladhuri, pp. 106–107 and 156). 3. All sources agree that a battle took place on February 25, 635. 4. All Greek sources, which are not contemporary with the events, were hostile to the regime then existing in Byzantium because it was Monothelitic and nowhere do they record victories of the Greeks. They were all anxious to prove that the catastrophe came as a result of the Emperor's deviation from "Orthodoxy."

I agree with Goeje that a vanguard force of Arabs did in fact fall into a trap set by Vaanes who was covering the retreat of the Byzantine army, and that Khalid Ibn Sayd was surprised and slain in a bloody clash, and his

detachment, badly mauled, fell back in disorderly retreat. The arrival of the main body of the Arab army under Khalid Ibn-Walid forced Vaanes, who it appears did not have a strong enough force, to withdraw to Damascus (Al-Makine, p. 19; Lammens, in E.I. III, pp. 294–295; Dussaud, Topographie historique etc., p. 318; Huart, Histoire des Arabes, I, 435; Abel, Histoire de la Palestine, II, 397). The battle took place on Saturday, February 25, 635. It is understandable that later Arab historians maintain that the Arabs were victorious (Baladhuri, p. 182; Suyuti, p. 77; Becker, C.M.H., II, 342; Hitti, History of the Arabs, p. 150), and that the victory cleared the road to Damascus.

III. Some difficulty arises in trying to decipher the narrative of Theophanes. If we accept this version, then the Greeks came via the Emesa (Homs)-Damascus route. But at this point east of Damascus the Vardanesius river no longer exists, having changed into numberless irrigation canals. Caetani believes that the only possible explanation is that the Greeks, having in mind the strong positions held by the Arabs and the losses which they had suffered in the engagement at Bayt-Lihya, took another route, further to the East and more difficult to traverse, and arrived at Damascus following the course of the Vardanesius river.

IV. The duration of the siege of Damascus has caused much controversy arising from the lack of agreement in the sources. Waqidi states that Damascus surrendered after a siege of 6 months, in the 14th year of the Hegira (635). Baladhuri (p. 190), says 4 months. On the other hand, Yakubi (p. 173) mentioned one year, Ishak 6 months, Al-Athir (II, 332) also 6 months. Tabari (ed. Zotenberg, III, 263 ff.) writes that Damascus was occupied after a siege of 6 months, as does Al-Khuwarizmi (Baethgen, Fragmenten usw., p. 110). Al-Makine (p. 22) records that the siege lasted between 70 days and 6 months, and Élie Bar Sinaya refers to a siege of 6 months. The same is recorded in the Chronicle of the Year 1234, but Eutychius (v. 1097) writes 6 months less one day. Bar Hebraeus who confused the two sieges says 7 months. Such is the resumé of the main sources which inform us about the fall of Damascus. Caetani (Annali etc., III), after an exhaustive study of all the sources, concludes that the city surrendered on the 14th of the month Rejeb, in the 14th year of the Hegira (September 4, 635) after a siege lasting about 6 months. Goeje, who also accepts a siege of about 6 months, cites a date of September 10, 635. On the other hand Weil maintains that Damascus surrendered in January 635. There is no doubt about the confusion of the sources which at all events are not contemporary with the event.

V. Baladhuri (p. 187) and Eutychius (p. 1097) maintain that because the inhabitants were suffering, the Bishop of Damascus sent a person (Eutychius says that he was an agent of Mansour) to inform Khalid that due to a certain festive holiday, the Gate of the East would be left unguarded. The Arabs thereupon scaled the walls by ladder and opened the Gate. At the same moment Ubaydah (Yazid according to Lammens) managed to force the Gate of Djabiyia. The defenders of the city rushed to throw back the enemy and many were slain. Another version related that the Bishop or Mansour, upon seeing that the city would be taken by assault by the forces of Ubaydah,

made a treaty of surrender with Khalid (see Chronicle of 1234, and Yakubi, p. 173). Tabari (ed. Zotenberg, III, 263 ff.) writes that Damascus was carried by assault 6 months or a year after Umar became Caliph. This version concerning the capture by assault is misleading. But many historians including Goeje and Hitti accept the tradition. It is certain that the city surrendered and the treaty agreement for the surrender was signed by Khalid (Baladhuri, p. 189; Caetani, II, 419).

VI. Concerning the commander of the Byzantine army the sources can be summarized as follows:

Michael the Syrian (ed. Chabot, II, 420 and his Armenian edition – Langlois, p. 230) refer to Vahan and the son of Sahrbaraz as commanders of the army. The Chronicle of 1234 (p. 195) mentions Vahan, the son of Sahrbaraz and the Sakellarius, patricius of Edessa. The Chronicle of course ignores the fact that "Sakellarius" is not a name but an honorary title. Eutychius writes of a "Mahan," that is, Vaanes. The Anonymous Chronicle of Guidi (ed. Nöldeke, p. 45) reports a certain "Sakellarius." On the other hand, Tabari writes that the Emperor himself was head of the army. Mirkhond (p. 67) refers to "Mahan, a wise and brave" man, whereas Maqdisi (V, 193) records Mahan, "The Domesticus." The conflict and confusion in the sources is therefore complete.

VII. On p. 337, Theophanes cites the battle of "Gabitha," but on p. 338 the battle of the "Hiermuthas River." On p. 332 he writes, "And there occurred the first terrible defeat of the Roman army with much bloodshed at Gabitha, Hiermoutha and Dathesmus." Ignoring the sequence in which Theophanes places the battles, it is quite clear that three battles are involved and that the engagement at Gabitha is different from that of Hiermoutha (Yarmuk). Baladhuri records (p. 175) that after the battle of Adjnadayn, the Greeks assembled at Al-Yakusah but were again defeated. According to Le Strange, Palestine etc., p. 54, Al-Yakusah is a defile of the river Yarmuk and was so named because the Greek army was destroyed there. Honigman (in E.I., IV, p. 1223) identifies Al Yakusah with Gabithas and maintains that Theophanes meant this battle.

VIII. The story is repeated by most of the Arab chronicles in differing versions. According to one version, news of his appointment had arrived during the battle of Adjnadayn soon after the death of Abu Bakr and Umar's assumption of the Caliphate. Unfortunately the dates do not coincide. The battle took place in July and Abu Bakr died in August. Tabari and the Fakhri source relate that during the battle of Yarmuk, a messenger arrived with the news that Ubaydah had been appointed and that Abu Bakr had died. But here again the dates do not coincide. Abu Bakr died in 634 whereas the Yarmuk engagement occurred in 636. Baladhuri (p. 176) records two other versions for the dating of the nomination of Ubaydah: 1. During the battle of Fihl and 2. during the siege of Damascus. At all events, the arrival in Syria of Ubaydah and his appointment as generalissimo and governor of all the territories that were conquered appears to fit in with the dismissal of Khalid. The latter, however, was not summoned back, but continued to head a corps of troops and to fight in Syria. Caetani (Annali, III, 355 ff.) believes that Ubaydah came to Syria with the most recent reinforcements just before Yar-

muk. Goeje (Mémoire etc.) maintains that he was named generalissimo before the second siege of Damascus. It is my view that Ubaydah arrived in Syria to take over the supreme command, but because of the dangers still confronting the Arabs, to avoid any possible confusion and most of all not to discourage Khalid, he did not reveal news of his appointment until after the battle of Yarmuk. There was then no longer a need for the leader of the Arabs to be a warrior, but a person who could govern politically and wisely the new densely populated and wealthy territories.

IX. Tabari (III, 409 ff.) records that Muawiyah advanced against Caesaria at the head of 5,000 men. Governor of the city was then Fiqar (probably confused with the Sakellarius) with 150,000 men. A battle was fought before the city in which 80,000 Romans perished! Baladhuri (p. 217 ff.) says that the city was garrisoned by 700,000 men! And that every evening 100,000 men were on guard. A Jewish inhabitant of the city went to the Arabs and showed them a path leading through a water tunnel. The Arabs entered the city at night through the tunnel. According to the Syriac sources, the Arabs entered the city through treachery and slew 7,000 of its defenders. The remainder of the garrison embarked on ships and departed (Michael the Syrian, II, 430, 431; Agapius, p. 194/454; Abul Faradj, p. 97; Anonymous Chronicle of 1234, p. 202). Kuwarazmi also reports that 100,000 Greeks were slain and dates the fall of Caesaria in the year 951 (A.D. 640), in the 19th year of the Hegira (640). Élie Bar Sinaya writes that 100,000 defenders of the city were killed. Another version, based primarily on pseudo-Wakidi, relates that Caesaria was defended by Constantine, son of Heraclius, who had under his command 40,000 men and in a battle before the walls of Caesaria the Byzantines were defeated. Constantine lost all hope and left for Constantinople, and the city surrendered and paid 200,000 solidi (Lebeau, op. cit., XI, 264–266; Gibbon, op. cit., V, 440; Papadopoulos, History of the Church of Jerusalem, p. 267). The version which appears to be most acceptable today is that the city was captured through the treachery of a Jew (Caetani, Annali, V, 158 ff. Ibid, Chronographia etc., I, 218; Lammens, La Syrie, I, 57; Muir, Annals etc., 219).

X. The information is based on Arab and Syrian sources, Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 213; Suyuti, op. cit., p. 136; Yaqut, ed. Wüstendfeld, IV, 593 ff. The latter records that Amr reached the outskirts of Jerusalem in the 16th year of the Hegira (636); Anonymous Chronicle 1234, p. 199; Baethgen, Fragments usw., p. 111. Caetani (Annali, III, 922) writes that Amr proceeded to Jerusalem at the end of the 15th year of the Hegira. He thus contradicts what he writes on p. 809, because he suggests that the distribution of the entire country amongst the emirs for operations was decided by the Arabs after they occupied Damascus. He dates the fall of Damascus in December 636/January 637. Vincent and Abel (Jerusalem etc., II, 930) and Abel (Histoire de la Palestine, p. 399) express the view that the siege of Jerusalem began in July 637. This, I believe, cannot be supported by any serious source. Moreover I doubt the accuracy of the information given by Mirkhond (p. 85) that battle was given before the Gates of Jerusalem and in fact after the arrival of Ubaydah in which the Arabs were victorious. For what reason

would an isolated garrison give battle outside the safety of the walls of the city?

XI. According to Theophanes (p. 339), the siege began in the year of the Creation 6127 (A.D. 635), in the 26th year of Heraclius (635/636), in the 2nd year of Umar (635/636) and lasted for two years. Cedrenus writes identically, p. 746. Agapius, on the other hand, and the Chronicle of Seert say no siege took place. Constantine Porphyrogenitus, De Adm. Imp., I, 82, records that the siege endured two years and that Umar took it by "dolo" (treachery) which word Lewis corrects (Volume II, 74) to read "logo" (by treaty). The correction agrees with the reading of Cedrenus (p. 746) which says occupied by treaty. According to Eutychius (p. 1099), Sophronius went out to meet Umar and only following guarantees by the latter surrendered the city to him. But the Syrian sources (Michael the Syrian, II, 425; Agapius, p. 215; Chronicle of Seert, p. 304; Abul Faradj, p. 96; Al Makine, p. 23; Anonymous Chronicle of 1234, p. 199) relate that the inhabitants of Jerusalem requested that Jews be prevented from residing in the city, and Umar signed an edict (sigillium) to this effect and he did not permit any pillaging or ill treatment of the inhabitants. Baron (Histoire d'Israel, III, p. 103) maintains that Umar accepted the condition concerning the Jews because he supported the "heretic" Christians who far outnumbered the Jews. This is incorrect since there were in Palestine very few "heretic" Christians (Monophysites, Nestorians and so on). In his footnote 33 on p. 331, Baron himself writes, on the other hand, that on the evidence of a chronicle of the 10th or 11th Century, Umar, contrary to his pledge, permitted 70 Jewish families to settle in the city. Mirkhond writes that Jerusalem was surrendered to Umar who also signed the capitulation treaty. Yakubi, Baladhuri, Yakut and Tabari record about the same.

XII. Élie Bar Sinaya, p. 83; George the Cypriot of Choziva etc. Baladhuri, op. cit., p. 214, says that the city surrendered in the 17th year of the Hegira (January 23, 638 – January 11, 639). Since, however, on the basis of the Theophanes text, Sophronius himself surrendered the city to Umar and died soon after, we should admit that the city was given up before his death. Sophronius died in March 638 (Acta Sanctorum, II, March, ad diem 11, p. 71; Papadopoulos, History of the Church of Jerusalem, p. 272). Grumel (La Chronologie, p. 451) maintains for the death of Sophronius, March 11, 638. I cannot understand why Goeje (op. cit., pp. 154–155) while correctly rejecting the information of Sayf that the city surrendered in the month of Rebi II of the 16th year (May 637), should argue that the city was given up after the death of Sophronius. This is contrary to what all the sources record.

XIII. Butler relies mainly on Hakam, but oddly places the meeting of Umar and Amr in Al-Djabiya in the spring of 639. But Umar visited Al-Djabiya only in the early part of 638. Becker (in C.M.H., II, 349) does not accept this tradition because, in his view, the conquest of Egypt occurred at a time when the conquests were being undertaken methodically. Amélineau (La conquête de l'Égypte etc.) believes that Umar gave permission for the invasion of Egypt after Palestine had been occupied. Hitti (History of the Arabs etc., pp. 160 ff.) believes that Amr weaned permission from Umar when

the latter had come to receive the capitulation of Jerusalem, but when Umar returned to Medina he sent a messenger to halt the expedition. This theory of Hitti does not fit in with the chronology. Umar went to Jerusalem in February 638 (See above, Chapt. IV, para. 6). Amr invaded Egypt towards the close of 639. Muir (Annals etc., pp. 239 ff.) dates the invasion the year following the choleric plague, hence the 19th year of the Hegira (639/640). Wiet (L'Égypte Arabe) agrees with Becker, and in his Précis de l'Histoire d'Égypte, II, 110, writes that the invasion was decided upon at Djabiya in 638. Weil also considers the story of Amr's march into Egypt without the permission of Umar as fictional. Wellhausen (Skizzen und Vorarbeiten, VI, pp. 93 ff.) thinks that Umar was aware of the proposed expedition and possibly ordered it. It is my opinion that Amr sought permission from Umar early in 638 when the latter had gone to Al-Djabiya to organize the newly-conquered territories, and that initially Umar refused to grant this because of the abnormal situation in Palestine, but at the insistence of Amr finally promised to allow him but with the reservation that only after the occupation of Palestine had been completed. When Amr, who was conducting the siege of Caesaria, was informed, following the death of Abu Ubaydah (who perished of the plague in 639), that Yiazid had been appointed governor of Syria, he was offended. Shrewd and alert, he realized that he would have to conquer a new territory and following this, without the permission of Umar, or at least believing that since most all of Palestine had been conquered, the reservations of Umar no longer held, began to prepare the new expedition. And I believe that he wrote of his plans to Umar before departing, and left before Umar's reply could reach him. This explains why he did not take the entire army under his command with him, but only a detachment, lest he be considered insubordinate acting against the orders of Umar which were to occupy the coastal cities of Palestine. So he left the larger part of his army under his son to help Muawiyah while he himself marched off to Egypt. Umar's agent reached him at Rafia (most Arab sources record as much). But fearing the refusal of Umar, he ignored the letter until he entered Egyptian territory. I am convinced that such a sequence of events coincides more with the existing traditions of Arabic sources and that of Eutychius. Otherwise, we would have to treat the entire incident of the departure of Amr without permission as fictional. Since the version is provided by the more serious sources, e.g., of Baladhuri, it should be taken more seriously.

There remains, of course, the matter of the Cyrus-Arab treaty and the payment of tribute for three years. But this will be considered in a following paragraph.

XIV. All contemporary historians who rely on John of Nikiu, p. 554 ff., agree that Theodore was commander of the army of Egypt. But Egypt was not only the large province of Egypt including Lower and Upper Egypt, Libya and Tripolitania, but the Ducate of Egypt, that is, one of the five large ducates of the entire province. Theodore was responsible only for his ducate. He did not concern himself with the Dux of Arcadia or the Dux of Thebais when the Arabs attacked their provinces. He was therefore the Dux of the Ducate of Egypt and the Augustalius of Egypt. It is significant that there is

no mention whatsoever in the sources that the old system of Justinian had been abolished. On the contrary, Nikiu himself, on pp. 572 and 573, refers to Theodore as Augustalius and a certain Constantine as commander of the army. For this reason I do not believe that we should accept the view that Theodore was commander in chief of all the Byzantine forces in the province of Egypt. It is not known for certain whether John of Barca was sent by Heraclius as generalissimo to Egypt. He was probably appointed only to lead the detachment which was to be sent from Constantinople. See Nicephorus, p. 24, and Maspéro, op. cit., p. 121.

XV. The matter of the size of the Byzantine army in this battle has been studied rather superficially. Butler estimated this to number 20,000 men and it is the figure that is generally accepted. But as Maspéro has shown, in the engagement at Heliopolis the only few remaining forces of the Ducate of the Augustamnian Egypt, that part of the forces of the Ducate of Egypt which could be utilized without diminishing the garrisons of the various cities, and a part of the army of the Ducate of Arcadia, took part in the battle. Neither the army of the Thebais nor that of Libya participated, in other words something less than half of the armies of the entire province. It is probable that the local forces were reinforced by imperial troops from Constantinople. But in view of the irregular situation in the imperial capital and the difficulty of sending by sea a large number of troops, these reinforcements were of necessity small. At all events, to judge by the letter of Umar to Amr (see fn. 415), it becomes clear that the Arabs always strove to outnumber the enemy in the field of battle.

XVI. Theophanes (p. 338) states that the negotiations took place before the entry into Egypt of the Arabs, but Nicephorus says (p. 25) after the invasion of Egypt. Agapius (p. 212), Michael the Syrian (II, 425), Abul Faradj (p. 95) and the Anonymous Chronicle of 1234 all write that Cyrus went out to meet Amr. Sévére d'Eschmounein (p. 227) speaks of an agreement between Heraclius and the Arabs. Baladhuri (pp. 339, 340), Eutychius (p. 1104) and Makrizi (ed. Bouriant, p. 466) say that Mucacus made an agreement with Amr. Butler identified Cyrus with Mucacus, an identity which is probably inaccurate. In any case, it is generally now accepted that during the siege of Babylon, Cyrus reached an agreement with Amr (Butler, op. cit., pp. 225 ff.; Becker II, 350; Diehl, op. cit., p. 547 ;Caetani, Annali, IV, 339 and Idris Bell, Egypt etc., p. 133).

XVII. Butler, Hitti and others maintain that Amr had 20,000 men under his command whereas the garrison of Alexandria contained 50,000. Amélineau rejects these figures. He argues that Amr was forced to leave garrisons in Babylon and various other cities which he had occupied in order to protect his lines of communication. Hence the army he had available for the siege of Alexandria could not have exceeded 12–15,000 men. Furthermore, it was impossible for Alexandria to have 50,000 troops available. As has been already pointed out the total army of Egypt was less than 30,000 in number. The garrisons of Augustamnian, Arcadian and Thebaic Egypt had been destroyed at least in part, if not entirely. The forces in Libya had not taken part in the battles. Garrisons existed in all the large cities of Lower Egypt.

Consequently, the garrison of Alexandria with whatever few reinforcements that may have arrived in the interim could not have exceeded 10,000 men. It should be noted that the reinforcements which may have been sent were small, since an army and fleet were being prepared in Rhodes to be despatched for the defenses of Alexandria, but this force had not yet departed from the island. I believe, therefore, that the numbers I quote are closer to the reality.

XVIII. Theophanes relates that after Cyrus was recalled, Manuel was sent as Augustalius, but he was eventually defeated and escaped "with a few survivors to Alexandria." Irrespective of the sequence of the events described by Theophanes in this passage, which he places in the year of the Creation 6125 (A.D. 634), the 25th of Heraclius (635), the entire episode involving Manuel concerns the reconquest of Alexandria by the Byzantines in 645 and their defeat then. Hence, this portion of the narrative should be entirely rejected. But the sequel should likewise be rejected even though he ends the story with the return of Cyrus and the agreement with the Arabs. Theophanes writes that when Heraclius was informed (i.e. of the defeat of Manuel), he sent Cyrus back to persuade the Arabs to return to the initial agreement (which he had rejected at first). According to Agapius (pp. 213–214/473–374), Heraclius wrote to Cyrus that he had wrongly slandered him, and that he gave him power of command in Egypt again with instructions to come to an agreement with the Arabs. But Cyrus asked himself how he could possibly eject the Arabs from Egypt in view of the fact that they had already occupied it and they had regarded him as a liar. Michael the Syrian (II, 425) relates an identical story. This version understandably is no longer accepted by anyone.

XIX. Theophanes reports (pp. 338–339) that Cyrus went to the camp of the Saracens to meet Amr. In defending himself, he maintained that he was not responsible for the violation of the treaty agreement and that if Amr so wished he would confirm the previous treaty by oath. Amr was not convinced and he refused to abandon Egypt. Agapius (p. 214/474) and Michael the Syrian (II, 425) write the same, but also add that Cyrus returned without accomplishing anything. Logically, this version cannot hold water. Amr and the Arabs already held the greater part of Egypt. By what possible reasoning could they have been willing to abandon territories they had already conquered in exchange for a small compensation. They could obtain far greater sums from the occupied lands than was proferred them. I do not know whence this version originates which is completely contradicted by the narrative of the only contemporary source we possess.

XX. John of Nikiu, p. 579. He mentions only the day and month, not the year. 642 is accepted by Brooks, Chronology etc., in B.Z., 6/1895; Butler, op. cit., p. 361; Bréhier, op. cit., p. 154; Duchêsne, L'Église au VIe siecle, p. 424; Becker in C.M.H., p. 351; and Wellhausen, Skizzen usw., p. 90. Some disagree with this date. Zotenberg on p. 578, fn. 4, influenced by some prophecy, concludes that Cyrus died on April 10, 643. The same view is held by Amélineau and Papadopoulos, History of the Church of Alexandria, p. 473. Oddly enough, however, Papadopoulos himself on p. 503 of his invaluable study writes "After Cyrus, Peter the Third, 642–651." But if

Cyrus were alive in 643, it would not have been possible to elect another Patriarch. Hence, I believe that Papadopoulos was mistaken in accepting the first date. See Butler, op. cit., Appendix D.

XXI. Grumel (Chronologie, p. 443) writes that Cyrus died between the close of 634 and early 644, at which time Peter was appointed Patriarch. Grumel unfortunately does not name his sources for this particular problem. On the matter, I have the following comments to make:

1. Grumel strays from the two known dates of 21/3/642 and 10/4/643. Moreover, he does not adhere to the text of John of Nikiu who links the death of Cyrus with the expulsion of Martina and Pyrrhus, that is, events that had occurred at the end of 641 and the beginning of 642, and before the departure of the Byzantines.
2. In 643–644, the Arabs had recalled from exile Benjamin, Coptic Patriarch of Alexandria, whom they recognised as leader of the Christians. Under no circumstances would they have accepted the election of a Melkite (i.e. imperial) patriarch, in which instance they would have come into direct conflict with the mass of Copts who comprised an overwhelming majority of the Egyptians. They applied the same policy in Jerusalem and Antioch. But in Jerusalem the reason was not the same as in Alexandria, since the Monophysites were few in number.
3. The official dating for the assumption by Peter of the patriarchal throne of Alexandria is 642. See Papadopoulos, op. cit., p. 503; Wellhausen, Skizzen usw., p. 90.

XXII. The famous library of Alexandria was built by Ptolemy Lagus at the suggestion of Demetrius Phalereus. Ptolemy Philadelpheus built a second library at the Serapium. The first was destroyed by Julius Caesar when he set fire to the Egyptian fleet. The second library was destroyed in about 391. It is reported (Abul Faradj) that Amr had written to Umar asking for instructions concerning the library, and Umar replied that if the books agreed with the sacred text (the Koran), then they were not needed, but if they differed then they should be destroyed as harmful. Following this Amr destroyed the books. The strange fact is that no library existed in Alexandria at the time to destroy. The reputed destruction of the library was first made known six centuries after the conquest of Alexandria. In 1227, Ibn al-Kifti recorded the reputed destruction. From him it passed to Abul Faradj Bar Hebraeus who flourished and wrote in the 13th Century and it was through the latter that Europe was startled to learn of the so-called firing of the library. The romantic story is rejected by all modern historians (Anguis, De récit des historiens etc.; Casanova, L'incendie de la Bibliothéque etc.; Butler, The Arab Conquest etc., pp. 401–426).

XXIII. The problem of dating the expedition against Tripolitania is very complicated. The Byzantine chroniclers make no reference to it whatsoever. Baladhuri relates that the campaign against Tripoli took place in the 22nd year of the Hegira, therefore 642/643. He maintains that this campaign was an extension of the expedition against the Pentapolis. Abd al-Hakam reports two years, the 22nd (642/643) and the 23rd (643/644) of the Hegira. In his edition of the said chronicle, Gateau notes that probably the expedition began

in the 22nd and ended in the 23rd year. Yakubi and El-Bekri report the 23rd. On the other hand, Eutychius writes the 22nd year of the Hegira and the 10th of Umar. But the 10th year of Umar corresponds to August 643-August 644. Butler, Caudel, Julien, Caetani and Becker accept 643 and most say that it was an extension of the campaign against Cyrenaica. Slane records the year 643–644, and Wiet 644. John of Nikiu describes the expedition in another manner. According to him, after the first expedition against Cyrenaica (Pentapolis), the Muslems returned to Egypt, hence the campaign against Tripoli was unrelated. Sévére El-Eschmounein (pp. 231–233) relates that Amr agreed with the Dux Sanutius (an Egyptian Copt) to recall the Coptic Patriarch Benjamin. The latter returned to Alexandria after 13 years of exile (John Nikiu, p. 584), therefore in 643/644. After his return Benjamin prayed on behalf of Amr, following which Amr and Sanutius marched against Tripoli. From these sources we obtain the following basic facts: The expedition began at the earliest after the arrival of Benjamin and ended necessarily before the dispute between Amr and Abd Allah ben Sad and the replacement of the former by the latter which occurred before the disembarkation of the Byzantine troops in Alexandria (the 25th year of the Hegira or 645). In view of the above facts, I conclude that the expedition against Tripoli took place in 644 or the 24th year of the Hegira.

XXIV. This date which no source whatsoever records can be deduced from the narrative of Nicephorus, p. 25. He relates that Heraclius reached Hierea and remained there for some time. Then the chronicler goes on to describe the plot and writes that Heraclius was informed of this when he was yet in Hierea. He continues the narrative with the return of the Emperor to Constantinople, the death of the Patriarch Sergius and lastly the proclamation of the son of Heraclius or Heracleonas Augustus. It is true that the chronological sequence of Nicephorus is not absolutely correct. Sergius died on the 8th or 9th of December 638 (Grumel, La Chronologie, p. 435). The coronation of the young Heraclius as Augustus took place on July 4, 638. The return of the Emperor to the capital is placed in the Spring of 638. Using these various dates one can conclude that the plot was discovered towards the close of 637. At all events, the date (635) which is cited by the editor of Vardan (Histoire Universelle, p. 86) and which is accepted by Grousset (Histoire de l'Arménie, p. 282) and Toumanoff (Armenia etc., C.M.H., IV, 605) is contrary to the facts. In 635 Heraclius had not yet returned from Syria and was somewhere between Antioch and Emesa, preparing a new army which was destined to be defeated at Yarmuk in 636.

XXV. Grierson maintains that the "Necrologium of Emperors" may be included among texts of the 13th Century and later, but it is a faithful translation of an older Greek text. Cyril Mango and Ihor Sevcenco (Dumbarton Oaks Papers, 16/1962, pp. 61–62) agree with this and point out the discovery of a new manuscript of the De Ceremoniis of Constantine Porphyrogenitus which, however, has not yet been studied. The manuscript contains chapters which are missing from the Leipzig manuscript and concern the Necrologium of Emperors. Grierson believes that the information supplied by the Necrologium is factual and can be confirmed by the Theophanes text.

Thus Grierson says the correction of the symbol for i (10) the months of Theophanes, to e (5) is not reliable, and that the safer correction would be to 3. Then we would arrive at 30 years and 3 months for the reign of Heraclius, giving us January 11, 641. In other words, we would confirm the chronology of the Necrologium through the Theophanes chronicle. English Byzantinologists have a peculiar weakness for altering and correcting chronology. Foremost is Baynes who with the dexterity of a juggler has corrected many dates to agree with what Theophanes says and has ended up with a chronology completely at variance with Theophanes (see Volume I, Notes XII, XIII and XLIII). I note that Theophanes writes explicitly and in full "March," and this is repeated by Cedrenus. The "iota" indicating 10 could have been a copyist's mistake, but under no circumstances could one agree that a copyist wrote "March" in the place of "January." In addition, I should make the following suggestions: 1. the only near contemporary chronicler of all the chroniclers who gives the date of Heraclius's death is John of Nikiu. He explicitly records this date as February 641. 2. Nicephorus, who was Patriarch of Constantinople, was in the position to confirm this date on the basis of the official archives of the Patriarchate. It is significant that both Nicephorus and Theophanes wrote approximately in the early 9th Century, or more than 160 years after the death of Heraclius. As Patriarch, Nicephorus could have checked the dates he gave, but probably this was not an easy matter for the monk Theophanes. One could well reply that the complete text of the Nicephorus chronicle has not come down to us, and precisely the same could be said for the Theophanes text. On what grounds therefore must we rely more on the Theophanes text as this is corrected by modern scholars and less on Nicephorus?

Irrespective of this, the Necrologium is replete with mistakes and Grierson in his observations continuously corrects the errors in the text. Two examples concerning the period are cited: the Necrologium records that Constantine, son of Heraclius, reigned 120 days. Grierson, on the basis of Nicephorus, corrects this to read 103 days. Also that Constantine (Constans), grandson of Heraclius, reigned 20 years. Grierson alters this (correctly) to read 27.

Such are the reasons for which I cannot agree with Grierson despite his exemplary arguments and model scholarship.

XXVI. I have described the two views concerning the coronation of the youthful Heraclius, the surnamed Constantine (Constans). Unfortunately, the other sources are not of any help in solving the problem. Theophanes and Zonaras make no reference to a co-Emperor and add that after the fall of Heraclius II, Constans was crowned emperor by the Senate. The Syrian chroniclers say about the same. In his study of Constantine III, Kaestner cites John of Nikiu and agrees that faced with the situation which held at Chalcedon and the revolt of the populace in the capital, Heraclius II and his friends (?) realized they could do nothing but come to an understanding with Valentinus. They proceeded to Chalcedon and after negotiations, a complete agreement was arrived at between the rebels and Heraclius II, and on the basis of this agreement three solidi were distributed to each of the soldiers who had supported Valentinus. Following this, Valentinus, in the

presence of Heraclius II crowned the young Heraclius who was, according to Sébéos, renamed Constantine.

This narrative conflicts with the actual events. The coronation took place in St. Sophia and it would be hardly possible for the populace to agree, contrary to tradition, to any one crowning the young man but the Emperor himself. The narrative of Nikiu is also unclear and full of contradictions. How was it possible for Valentinus, who was in Chalcedon, to know that all were loyal to Heraclius II, at the very moment the Senate, the clergy, the aristocracy and the populace were very restless. The relation by Nicephorus is far clearer.

Irrespective of this, however, Cedrenus who is the only one that refers to the distribution of the 3 solidi to each soldier, a "legatus" and not a mutineer, writes explicitly that the distribution was made by "Heraclonas" himself in memory of his brother. John of Nikiu, on the other hand, relates that Valentinus received the monies from Philagrius and distributed these. This supplements the information supplied by Nicephorus (p. 28), to the effect that when Constantine II had received the advice of Philagrius, he sent to Valentinus a sum of money to look after the interests of his sons. Hence, two entirely different incidents are involved which are mistakenly interpreted as a single event. For this reason, the conclusion drawn by Kaestner is incorrect.

XXVII. Kaestner, De Imperio Constantino, III, p. 24, relying on Sébéos (p. 104), maintains that the renaming was done by Valentinus. I believe this version to be mistaken. Sébéos writes that Valentinus elevated Constans to the throne and renamed him Constantine to perpetuate the name of his father, and therefore, Sébéos knew that he was known as "Constans," unaware of the name of Heraclius. "Constans" was an affectionate diminutive given by the Byzantines to the youthful Heraclius-Constantine which survived in all later chroniclers. But more about this in a following book when I deal with the reign of Constantine II (Constans). And so, Sébéos had heard of a certain renaming, but he did not know when precisely it had occurred or what the original name was of the recipient. Consequently, we cannot rely on the information supplied by Sébéos. On the other hand, Nicephorus is categorical, and says the "people" gave him the new name.

XXVIII. Both Chalcedon and Charcedon (Carthage) can be correct. It should be remembered that Pyrrhus, before becoming Patriarch, was abbot of the Monastery of Chrysopolis which was situated near Chalcedon. It would be the natural thing to do, if he felt his life endangered, to seek as his first refuge the peace and quiet of the Monastery which he knew and which was near the capital.

But Carthage, too, can be correct because: 1. John of Nikiu informs us that Pyrrhus was sent into exile to Tripoli (?) of Africa. 2. A short time later, we encounter him in Carthage where he conducted the famous discussion with Maximus the Confessor (see Maximus Works, in Migne, P.G., XCI; Zonaras, III, pp. 310 ff.; Synopsis Sathas, p. 110). 3. The continuation of the narrative of Nicephorus convinces me that the correction by De Boor is sound. Nicephorus relates that when the monks learned of the coming of Pyrrhus, being aware of his opposing views concerning the two energies and the two

wills of Christ, of which theory Maximus and Theodosius (?) were protagonists, began to investigate (?) the matter. What investigation they may have made we do not know, because the beliefs of Pyrrhus on the subject were known to them from the "Ecthesis". At all events, an investigation of such a theme could not possibly have been conducted at Chalcedon.

We know from the Life of Maximus that he was living during that period in Carthage. Moreover, we have letters of his dating from the period. Hence, the relation by Nicephorus alone could suffice to make us read "Carthage" rather than "Chalcedon" in the text.

XXIX. I have quoted the relevant passages of Theophanes and Cedrenus in the text. There are, besides these, the following sources: 1. Zonaras (III, p. 313), who writes pretty much the same as Theophanes but without specifying a reign of 6 months. It simply states "soon falling from power." 2. Manasses (v. 3809), who records "but briefly." 3. The Anonymous Synopsis of Sathas (p. 110) writes similarly to Theophanes and specifies a reign of 6 months. 4. Leo the Grammarian (p. 156) says 4 months. Theodosius of Melitene (p. 108) and Joel (p. 47) record the same. 5. Agapius (p. 218) writes 8 months. 6. The Chronicle of Seert (p. 309) also records that "Heraclonas" reigned for 8 months. 7. The Chronicle of Jacob of Edessa states that Constantine was crowned king in the 12th year of Umar's reign. But the Caliph Umar had in actual fact reigned only 10 years and a few months. Other Eastern chroniclers in general make no reference to the duration of the reign of Heraclius II. The Western chroniclers write of an unlikely duration. Most of them, including Paul the Deacon, John the Deacon (Chronicon Venetum, etc.), Bede (Chronica, p. 342), Chronicon Isidori etc. (p. 261), Chronicon Casinense etc. (p. 354), maintain that Heraclius II together with his mother Martina ruled for 2 years.

Most Byzantine chroniclers support the contention that Heraclius II and Martina were expelled by the Senate. The Anonymous Chronicle of the year 1234 (p. 203) writes the same. On the other hand, the Armenians (Sébéos and Vardan) maintain that Heraclius II and Martina were dethroned by Valentinus and the army. Oddly enough none of the above chroniclers makes mention of the crowning of the young Heraclius-Constantine by his uncle Heraclius II, or of the brief duration of the co-reign of these two. Such are the sources dealing with the length of the reign of Heraclius II.

XXX. The narrative of John of Nikiu is most unreliable and conflicts with many points in his own story. On p. 579 he writes that Valentinus and Domentianus crowned the youthful Heraclius-Constantine (Constans). On p. 581 he records that Theodore and his army proclaimed Constans, son of Constantine, Emperor. What precisely is the accusation against Kubrat concerning a plot with Marina? Kubrat, leader of the Bulgars, was then living in the Volga region. How could he possibly be formulating a plot with Martina and to help her? Some attempt has been made to identify this reported incident and the person himself with Kuber of the Book of Miracles of St. Demetrius (see Chapt. VIII, para. 3). But such an identification is equally incorrect. How could he possibly have assisted Martina when he was established in the plain of Monastir and sought food and supplies from the Dragou-

bite Slavs in the neighbourhood, and the whole of Byzantium had arisen against her? Who is the person whom John of Nikiu records as "Jutalius, named Theodore, son of Constantine." Zotenberg, in fn. 2 of p. 580, claims that "Jutalius" is probably a title or rank. But this person is referred to as leader of the army of "Cappadocia," furthermore, that he was active in Armenia. Do we know of any such general? Following Sébéos, after the insurrection of Valentinus had been put down and after his death, Theodore was appointed commander of the army of Armenia, who was one of the "loyal Armenian princes of Greek Armenia." Most probably this person was appointed as patricius and general of the Armeniac theme, for this reason John of Nikiu refers to him as leader of the army of Cappadocia. Cappadocia then constituted a part of that theme. This Theodore should not be confused with the Theodore Rstuni who was later made commander of the army of the former Persian Armenia. Who is the logothete David? We know of some Armenian David, commander of the army of the Romans (Anonymous Chronicle of the year 1234, p. 203) at that time or soon after, who together with Valentinus faced the Arabs and were defeated by them. Can it be the same person? Then we can understand why he fled to the fortresses of Armenia, since he was an Armenian. Should the Theodore of Nikiu be identified with the Theodore of Sébéos, and David with the David of the Anonymous Chronicle? But both were active, especially Theodore, in a subsequent period (2 or 3 years later). Such are the conflicts and such are the obscure points of the narrative of John of Nikiu which persuade me not to accept his writings completely and not to rely on him absolutely. I believe that John of Nikiu, a contemporary of the events he records, but who lived in the distant city of Nikiu, is very reliable only for events in Egypt or for events that occurred before Egypt was occupied by the Arabs. The city of Nikiu was taken by the Arabs in May 641, and Egypt was surrendered in September 642. Henceforth, there was very little communication between Egypt and Byzantium, at least until the summer of 645. John of Nikiu had collected and assembled much information and various reports which, however, were not chronologically linked. These reports he recorded as he received them without making (it is doubtful whether he could) a logical and critical examination of the materials at hand before setting them down in a unified form. Moreover, we should not forget that the text which has come down to us is very corrupt and defective.

XXXI. In his study of the Chronology of Theophanes (Die Chronologie des Theophanes in 7 and 8 Jahrhundert), Ostrogorsky maintains that Heraclius died in the year 6132, the 14th Indiction. He corrects the year and the Indiction, but I do not believe the correction to be sound. Since he accepts the Nicephorus passage that Heraclius died in February 641, both the year and the Indiction mentioned by Theophanes are correct. The year 6132 begins in March of 640 and ends in March of 641, and the 14th Indiction, September 1, 640 – August 31, 641 (see Grumel, La Chronologie, p. 95). But even if we were to accept the chronology of Theophanes (as corrected), by which Heraclius died on March 11, then again we have the year 6132 and the 14th Indiction. Furthermore, Ostrogorsky does not accept the 4 months

of Theophanes for the reign of Constantine, but the 103 days of Nicephorus. He then arrives at May 26 (it would have been more accurate to arrive at May 25, since the first day of the reign of the new emperor is counted from the day of the death of the emperor). Afterwards, he again rejects the 6 months of Theophanes for the reign of Heraclius II, and substitutes the 4 of Leo the Grammarian, thus concluding that the dethronement of Heraclius and Martina took place on September 26, 641. Ostrogorsky uses very much the same argument in Kornemann, Doppelprinzipät, p. 164. To strengthen his theory even more in his History of the Byzantine State (p. 102, fn. 1) he cites Kaestner (De Imperio Constantino III) saying that although he correctly understood that the expulsion of Pyrrhus could not have occurred as long as Heraclius II and Martina held the reins of power, he had not arrived at the correct conclusions but moved the date of the expulsion of Pyrrhus to November 641, when, according to Kaestner, the revolution had broken out. And finally, he also cites Brooks (On the Chronology of the Conquest of Egypt by the Saracens) according to whom the reign of the young Heraclius-Constantine (Constans), on the basis of the intrigues of Valentinus, could not have possibly begun after the 5th of October at the latest. The Acta of the Lateran Synod are dated in the 9th year of the reign of Constantine (Constans) (See Mansi, X, 864), and the Synod itself met for the first time on October 5, 649.

I have the following observations to make on these points:

1. Chronology of Leo the Grammarian. I do not think it proper that part of the text of one chronicler be rejected, another part be accepted, and that which has been accepted be added to the information supplied by another chronicler, part of whose text has also been rejected. As has been pointed out in footnote 818, Leo the Grammarian maintains that Heraclius I had died in March of 641 (the corrected date of Theophanes), Constantine II reigned for one year, and hence died in March of 642, and Heraclius II was dethroned after a 4 months' reign, therefore, in July 642. We must accept the entire chronology of this chronicler, or reject it. To base our calculations on the Nicephorus text for the date of the deaths of Heraclius I and Constantine II, rejecting his information that Heraclius II continued to reign as Emperor in October, and then to return to the narrative of Leo the Grammarian of which we threw out another part is, I believe, highly irregular.
2. The study by Kaestner is certainly praiseworthy, but we should bear in mind that it is a study by a young candidate for a doctorate. Kaestner recognized some difficulty because he made the same error into which Ostrogorsky had fallen. He argued that Pyrrhus was dismissed. This information is supplied by Theophanes. But Nicephorus states categorically that Pyrrhus was not dismissed. Pope Theodore was to raise the matter when he recognized Pyrrhus as the lawful Patriarch of Constantinople. We have therefore the most concrete information from Nicephorus, the most reliable Byzantine historian, which is confirmed by Western sources contemporary with the events. And I ask why we accept the narrative of Theophanes but not his chronology?

3. In his study Brooks rightly maintains that the young Constantine must have been crowned Emperor before October 5. But nowhere does he maintain that he should have been crowned the only and sole Emperor. The reigns of emperors are measured from the day of coronation even though they were initially proclaimed co-emperors. Constantine IV became sole monarch in 668 when his father died. The acts of the 6th Ecumenical Council (680–681) refer to the 27th year of his reign and this because he had been crowned co-Emperor in 654. To cite an example from the Chronicon Paschale, p. 705, the 5th year of Heraclius (October 614-October 615). Beginning with January 22, 615, it reads the reign of Heraclius, the young Constantine, third year. Quite correctly, because on the basis of the Chronicon Paschale in January 613 the very young Constantine was crowned Emperor. Since the young Heraclius-Constantine (Constans), as I wrote in the text, was made co-Emperor on the 27th or 28th of September 641, the Acta of the Lateran Synod in October 649 correctly refer to the 9th year of his reign because this began September 27 or 28 in 649. The coronation of Constantine (Constans) took place once and only once. The revolution that expelled Heraclius II did not result in a new coronation of Constantine which was not necessary but was merely his installation as the sole reigning monarch.
4. Any argument that Pyrrhus had to be Patriarch to write the letter to the logothete David, on the basis of the text of John of Nikiu, cannot be used to support the Ostrogorsky contention. John himself does not completely believe the letter to be authentic, and he adds "a letter which they say that ...," and irrespective of whether, as I have written in the previous note, the entire episode does not appear to me to be factual, the letter could have been written before Pyrrus fled, and was discovered several months or even days later. Such are the grounds on which I maintain that the interpretation of Ostrogosky is unfounded.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

The Bibliography does not include all the works that have been read or consulted. The period which I have examined and the notes go as far as 685 A.D. An effort has been made to separate the sources and the main texts that were consulted for the present study. As has been pointed out in the first volume, the present Bibliography is not by any means exhaustive, particularly on Arabia, Mohammed, Mohammedanism and the spread of the Arabs. The list of books on the latter subjects is indeed remarkably extensive. Hence my Bibliography relates only to the present study and is not a general bibliography containing the references to all the subject matter.

The Bibliography is divided into two parts:

I. Sources
II. Authors

The principal abbreviations in use are the following:

A.I.B.	– Analecta of the Jerusalem Library, ed. Papadopoulos-Kerameus.
A.I.K.	– Annales de l'Institut Kondakov
An. Bol	– Analecta Bollandiana
Byz.	– Byzantion, Brussels
B.Z.	– Byzantinische Zeitschrift, Leipzig and Munich
C.E.H.	– Cambridge Economical History
C.M.H.	– Cambridge Medieval History
C.S.C.O.	– Corpus Scriptorum Christianorum Orientalium
C.S.H.B.	– Corpus Scriptorum Historiae Byzantinae, ed. Bonn
D.O.P.	– Dumbarton Oaks Papers
E.E.B.S.	– Annual of the Society of Byzantine Studies, Athens, in Greek
E.H.R.	– English Historical Review
E.I.	– Encyclopédie de l'Islam
E.O.	– Échos d'Orient, Paris
Goeje, B.G.A.	– Bibliotheca Geographorum Araborum, ed. Goeje
Goeze, F.H.A.	– Fragmenta Historicorum Araborum, ed. Goeje
J.A.	– Journal Asiatique
J.H.S.	– Journal of Hellenic Studies
M.G.H.	– Monumenta Germaniae Historica
Migne, P.G.	– Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Graeca
Migne, P.L.	– Patrologiae Cursus Completus, Series Latina

Pisides, Exp. Pers.	– Expeditio Persica
Her.	– Heracleas
P.O.	– Patrologia Orientalis, Graffin and Nau.
Porphyrogenitus,	Constantine:
De Cer.	– De Ceremoniis
De Them.	– De Thematibus
De Adm. Imp.	– De Administrando Imperio
R.E.	– Pauly and Wissowa Realencyclopädie
R.E.B.	– Revue des Études Byzantines
S.O.C.	– Scriptores Originum Constantinopolitarum, ed. Preger
Viz. Vr.	– Vizantiniski Vremenik, Moscow, in Russian

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